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# Education for the Changing Public Sector: An Impact Study of the SUNY Buffalo State's MPA in the Erie County Department of Social Services' Employee Education Program

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Education for the Changing Public Sector: An Impact Study of the  
SUNY Buffalo State's MPA in the Erie County Department of Social  
Services' Employee Education Program

Caroline Alagna

In Partial Fulfillment of requirements for PAD 690 Masters Project

SUNY Buffalo State

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Laurie Buonanno (Chair)  
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## **Abstract**

In 1982, the Erie County Department of Social Services (ECDSS) developed the Employee Education Program (EEP). The EEP is an educational sponsorship program that provides eligible employees with a tuition-free education at area higher education institutions for a number of various degrees. One such degree is the Public Administration in Public and Nonprofit Management, or MPA at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo State College. This 2017 evaluation concentrates on identifying the skills and knowledge that employees of ECDSS gained from their participation in the MPA component of the EEP and the impact that these new or better-developed abilities have on the employees, as well as the agency. The evaluation team utilized a multi-phase mixed methods study to gather data from current participants and past graduates, as well as supervisors and administrators throughout the agency. The data gathered from these populations were then compared to the goals of the EEP at ECDSS and the goals of the MPA program at Buffalo State College. This study was conducted to provide stakeholders of the EEP with empirical evidence of the value that the program brings to the agency. The results reveal that employees are gaining those (technical, conceptual, communication, and business) skills deemed important for public administrators. These employees are able to use many of these skills in their current jobs, they are performing better, and they do not appear to be leaving the agency once they receive their degrees. Participants and supervisors agree that the EEP is a valuable asset to the agency. While the goals of the program (professionalization of staff, performance improvement, increased promotability of staff, longer retention of quality staff) are being attained, ECDSS can do more to utilize the skills and knowledge of EEP enrollees and graduates.

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## **Chapter I: Introduction**

### **Introduction**

The Erie County Department of Social Services (ECDSS) has always recognized the need for a highly skilled and competent workforce, and is committed to achieving professional excellence for every employee. In 1982, the Department developed the Employee Education Program (EEP), which has since become the academic foundation of the Department's competency-based training requirements. This program is primarily funded from State and Federal employee training and development budgets. The residual costs of administering the EEP are absorbed by the Research Foundation for SUNY, leaving no local share to Erie County. ECDSS, via the EEP, collaborates with area higher education institutions to provide eligible staff with an opportunity to further their education by sponsoring these employees to pursue a number of professional certificates and academic degrees. The purpose of the EEP is to increase the knowledge and skill levels of employees within the agency, as well as enhance professionalism in the workplace. Upon successful completion of the degree requirements, an additional goal of the EEP is to facilitate the advancement of these employees within the agency. Having an advanced degree enables employees to become eligible for more civil service examinations as well as administrative positions within the agency. As these employees move and advance throughout the department, so too does the knowledge and skills they have acquired along the way. It is expected that these employees share their experience and knowledge with those around them.



The State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo State's Public Administration in Public and Nonprofit Management (MPA)<sup>1</sup> program concentrates on providing the conceptual, technical, and professional skills required for leadership positions in the public and nonprofit sectors. SUNY Buffalo State's MPA program is a member of the National Association of Schools on Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). MPA programs around the globe base their designs, curricula, and standards around NASPAA's development of the core competencies that are needed by today's public administrators. These programs combine theory and practice to provide students with the practical knowledge they will require when working in the public sector. The courses are developed to provide students with the competencies they need in order to "lead and manage in public governance; participate in and contribute to the public policy process; analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions; articulate and apply a public service perspective; and communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry" (Shevchenko, 2016, p. 65).

ECDSS employees who wish to participate in the MPA program through sponsorship by the EEP must first have the academic credentials required by the college. In addition, they are required to submit two professional or academic references and a letter of intent. To be sponsored by the ECDSS EEP for this degree, prospective applicants must be employed with ECDSS for at

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<sup>1</sup> The actual name of the degree program is Public Administration in Public and Nonprofit Management, MPA. Some participants of the EEP have participated in the Multidisciplinary Studies, or MDS, degree program at SUNY Buffalo State, which preceded establishment of the MPA at Buffalo State. Although much of this coursework in the MDS concentrated on Human Services Administration (HSA), it differs from the MPA degree in several important respects. The MPA requires three additional credit hours and focuses more broadly on public policy and public administration. Throughout this paper, when referring to the MPA, the term will also include the former MDS – HSA track.

least three<sup>2</sup> years and have their immediate supervisor approve their application. A liaison<sup>3</sup> has been designated by ECDSS to work with applicants and active participants of the program to coordinate activities with SUNY Buffalo State, to arrange or rearrange an employee's work schedule, and to also help students (employees) select projects for their classes and final capstone projects (PAD 690-Master's project). ECDSS employees accepted into the program are expected to maintain or surpass their current performance levels at the agency and are also expected to maintain a minimum 3.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) in the MPA program.

Significantly, there have not been any in-depth studies about how the MPA component of the EEP program is currently performing. Therefore, this summative program evaluation provides stakeholders with information about the MPA program's impact within the ECDSS. Furthermore, ECDSS can utilize this program evaluation to assist the EEP in working with SUNY Buffalo State's Public Administration and Nonprofit Division of the Department of Political Science to further achieve ECDSS goals and mission. It is anticipated that other public sector agencies can also benefit from this program evaluation to consider whether partnership with local colleges can similarly assist with goal and mission achievement.

\*\*\*

Government changes every day due to a variety of factors, including political and organizational changes, globalization, governance, and cultural changes. As a result, leaders change; management tools change; policies change; and ideas change (Nygaard & Bramming, 2008). Because nothing is constant, government must continuously adapt and evolve to keep up with ever-

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<sup>2</sup> ECDSS has changed this requirement from one to three years, and since the start of this project, again reduced it to one year.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Shea is the designated liaison assigned to help EEP participants. He is the Staff Development Coordinator at ECDSS. He assists in developing and implementing the entire training program of the agency. He was also a participant of the EEP while pursuing an MPA degree.

shifting priorities, and do so with ever-decreasing budgets and resources. New demands are being placed on governments to be more strategic. One such demand calls for well-educated leaders in the public sector (Holmes, 2012; Levine, et.al., 2013). Public sector leaders need to have new skills, knowledge, and abilities to solve complex, far-reaching problems. Public administrators need to be able to work across various networks and sectors (collaborate) to provide quality goods and services within the constraint of shrinking budgets. Effective leadership requires strong communication skills, high order thinking/analytical skills, and the ability to remain flexible in ambiguous internal and external environments. In addition to these challenges, workforce demographics are also shifting.

Older generations (particularly veterans and Baby Boomers) of public sector workers are currently being replaced with younger generations. These younger generations will become the new workforce majority, and with them come a new set of expectations and values. They tend to be more technologically savvy, more eager to learn, more socially and culturally competent, and they genuinely want to make a difference (Hobart & Sendek, 2014). Public sector agencies compete with the private and nonprofit sectors to recruit and retain these workers. Although they cannot match the pay scales of their private sector counterparts, public sector agencies can attempt to attract and retain Generation Xers and Millennials in ways that capitalize on these generations' values. One such way is to assist them in continuing education. As citizens and constituents continuously push leaders to make more informed (spending) decisions, providing advanced leadership training and development to public sector employees fulfills this demand (Seidle & Fernandez, 2016). According to Oldfield (2017), "quick-fix" trainings are problematic in terms of employee impact. Conversely, the MPA offers public sector employees an arena to discuss

workplace/governmental/societal problems, the opportunity to learn from others in the field, and the ability to apply this newly-acquired knowledge to find solutions.

## **Study Purpose**

The majority of positions at the ECDSS require a prospective applicant to take a civil service exam before they are able to obtain employment at the agency. These examinations measure an applicant's aptitude on various subjects and are based around the job duties required of the position they seek. Once the results are tabulated, applicants are ranked by their test scores. The higher an applicant scores on the exam, the better chance he or she has of obtaining employment at ECDSS. Although the merit system based on competitive examination is widely accepted in democratic systems as balancing both equity and efficiency in determining who should be offered public sector employment, competitive examination is not always the most reliable means of establishing who is best qualified for a position. Civil service examination measure minimum qualifications, and do not have the capacity to determine what other qualifications and competencies applicants may possess. Along these lines, Dougherty and Van Gelder (2015, p. 171) argue, "Providing public value requires finding talented employees." Civil service exams may have their place in screening public sector applicants, but they do not necessarily provide an agency with only high quality, talented employees. Some candidates are intelligent enough to perform well on examinations, however they lack other critical competencies needed for advanced positions throughout the agency. Managers and supervisors can help mitigate this problem through recognition of employee potential and "should seek innovative ways to motivate and recognize younger employees for successful succession planning in the public sector" (Holmes, 2012, p. 451). It is, therefore, recognized that the public sector should identify and nurture emerging leaders within

their agencies. One strategy for obtaining this objective is through providing advanced leadership training to those employees demonstrating more potential than their peers.

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Therefore, the purpose of this program evaluation of SUNY Buffalo State's MPA program in ECDSS EEP is twofold: 1) to examine the impact of the program on ECDSS participants, and 2) to explore the impact of the program and ECDSS as a whole. This program evaluation will provide stakeholders of the program with important information about how the program is performing in comparison to the goals set forth by administrators. Throughout this evaluation, we will identify the skills and competencies participants are gaining, how these skills are being utilized within the agency, examine employee performance and retention, and discuss suggestions for improvements. The findings will have significant implications for ECDSS-EEP because if we can identify the value the SUNY Buffalo State MPA brings to the agency, ECDSS can recruit high-potential employees into the program. And significantly, as positions become vacated (due to retirements, promotions, or exiting the County), ECDSS will have a reservoir of employees with the necessary skills and knowledge needed for public sector management and leadership positions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Chapter II: Employee Training in the Public Sector**

### **Introduction**

Much of the literature reviewed focuses on the functions of government, what public administrators do and what skills they need to perform their duties, and why education is necessary in order to ensure effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability in government. Although the main purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of the MPA component of the EEP at ECDSS, we must first discuss the importance of these topics in order to highlight the mandatory skills needed by today's public administrators. Only then can we determine the extent of the MPA's value not only to the ECDSS and its employees, but also to the citizens and constituents that this agency and its employees interact with on a daily basis.

### **Role of Government**

Government has an ever-expanding and ever-changing role in the world. As Hughes (2003, p. 72) notes, "The public sector has a crucial role to play in determining real living standards, which depend for most people on government services - the quality of schools, hospitals, community care, the environment, public transport, law and order, town planning, and welfare services - at least as much as the quality of consumer goods and services." Because these policies are so far reaching and their impact so widespread, there are many stakeholders who are interested in influencing such initiatives. As a result, priorities constantly shift, forcing the public sector to continuously adapt to the needs and wants of society as governments (and their activities) have grown more complex, diverse, and demanding (Sherwood, 1997).

Since at least the 1980s with the advent of “New Public Management” and continuing into the new millennium with the “New Public Service” paradigm, citizens and elected officials have increasingly expected the public sector at the local, state, and federal levels to become more innovative and collaborative, relying increasingly on technology, as well as on a variety of organizations (including nonprofit and for-profit agencies) to perform its work, much of which can span across the globe. This new dynamic has impacted expectations on the skills and performance of government employees. With globalization, governance, increased power delegation, and with so many people performing the government's work (many of whom are not public sector employees), there is much at stake. Public sector agencies are constantly struggling to remain cost-effective, manageable, effective, efficient, accountable, and trustworthy (Kettl, 2000; Rubaii, 2016; Sherwood, 1997; Henry, 2013).

## **Public Administrators**

The role and duties of the public administrator have evolved, and will continue to evolve in order to adapt to the ever-changing (economic, social, political, organizational) environments in which they work. Due to a pattern of decreasing budgets, legislators and citizens expect public sector agencies and their employees to perform at the highest levels of efficiency and effectiveness. One such way to meet these demands has been in the outsourcing of the government agency's mandated responsibilities in the delivery of goods and services to nongovernmental organizations. Therefore, public administrators need to be able to effectively manage and regulate the various sectors with which they work. Public sector employees need project management and networking skills, as well as the social knowledge to work with diverse groups (e.g. cultural competency). Public administrators need to be cooperative, motivating, influential, and strategic to collaboratively solve complex problems in innovative and justifiable ways.

There is also a growing demand for a more participatory, transparent government (New Public Service). Citizens want to know that government and its employees are working to address their concerns and needs. In fulfilling this duty, public administrators must play a dual role; one in that they help perform the day-to-day functions of the government, and the other as a representative partner of the citizenry (Cooper & Gulick, 1984). Public administrators need to be empathetic to public concerns, and encourage participation whenever possible. This calls for more open government, and involves more inclusive decision-making and efforts to reduce barriers (between itself, citizens, and other sectors). To become more inclusive, public administrators are attempting to reach out and include more members of their communities. This can be done by encouraging the public's attendance of community forums, groups, and hearings in order to increase citizen participation in the decision-making process. The increasing use of technology is another way to communicate with and serve members of the public. These proactive measures help to increase government credibility and accountability to the public as well as further the democratic ideals of our nation as a whole. The ability to adapt and (re)adjust objectives, structures, and capabilities are needed to keep pace with societal needs (Cooper & Gulick, 1984; Witesman & Wise, 2012)

Trust and confidence in government is a major cause for concern in United States and other postindustrial democratic systems. The public sector is constantly scrutinized for the mistakes that it makes. It is vital, especially in this day and age, that citizens believe that government employees are not using their positions to benefit themselves. Therefore, ethics are imperative if government is to remain credible. Ethics outline and guide the behavior, principles, and values of organizations, and are thus mandatory for public administrators (Haq, 2011). Public sector employees make a variety of decisions directly affecting members of society and the economy as



a whole. It is critical that citizens believe that the greater public interest is being served. The citizenry needs to trust that these government workers are honest, fair, transparent, and looking out for their best interests (Sherwood, 1997; Henry, 2013; Hughes, 2003).

## **Management and Leadership Skills**

Public administration is not only a system of “the what, and the why,” but also of the how.

Leader and manager behaviors have a direct impact on those around them, which in turn influences how agencies and employees perform. Leadership skills are essential to ensure the continuity of an agency's success and credibility. Public administrators can no longer limit themselves to traditional models of management where managers simply provide subordinates with the necessary resources needed in order to get a job done and expect that results will be delivered. Although traditional models of management still exist, more leadership training is needed if the agency is to sustain a healthy and productive work environment. The role of the adaptive, transformative, and relational leader is now at the forefront of public administration. Administrators need to rely not only on task-oriented management styles but also on relations-oriented leadership styles. Leaders influence, motivate, and provide direction to employees in order to attain organizational goals. The ideal combination is a manager with leadership qualities and a leader that can effectively manage others (Solomon, Costea, & Nita, 2016; Toor & Ofori, 2008; Gilbert, De Winne, & Sels, 2011).

There is a call in the public sector for greater organizational and leadership training and development. The skills acquired (or better developed) through such training not only improve the performance of those being trained but also on the organization as a whole (Seidle & Fernandez, 2006). It is important to recognize that workers learn in different ways and are motivated by different factors. Techniques and leadership styles that work for one

employee/group, may not be as effective when utilized with others. Public sector employees are generally content with their supervisors' level of technical knowledge, but are disconcerted with their supervisors' lack of leadership skills (Holmes, 2012). Therefore, public administrators need to have a repertoire of techniques that they use when motivating others and resolving conflicts. Leadership training provides public administrators with the tools they require when working with such a diverse workforce. The ability to motivate, influence, and guide others in ways that they can understand and relate to are essential if government is to perform at the levels that citizens and stakeholders expect.

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To address the concerns discussed thus far, it is imperative that public administrators have an array of skills and competencies at their disposal to keep government functioning smoothly and without interruption. Most of these skills can be classified as technical, cognitive/conceptual, interpersonal, emotional, social, business, and strategic in nature (Haq, 2011; Maccoby & Scudder, 2011; Mumford, Campion, & Morgeson, 2007; Clarke, 2010). When combined, these skills build an ideal manager and leader for work in government affairs and public administration. As government continues to adapt and reform, these skills will become increasingly relevant for the staffing and continued education of public sector employees.

### **Technical Skills: (Knowledge of Government/Public Organizations)**

Effective leaders and administrators need to take on a system or organizational view of how things work and why (Mumford, et.al., 2007). Technical skills include knowledge of the processes, procedures, rules, and regulations of government organizations and how they work together or even against each other. They also include specific knowledge of the programs and services

offered within one's agency, and the technology used to deliver them. This type of knowledge gives public administrators the ability to evaluate the effectiveness and performance of their programs. Technical skills and knowledge help administrators improve service procedures, processes, and delivery to ensure that their system is functioning at necessary levels. An effective leader must be able to foresee potential obstacles and opportunities, and must envision possible solutions. They must also be able to collaborate, motivate, and empower others in order to avoid a disruption in functions. Technical skills enhance an organization's ability to respond, as well as remain transparent and accountable (Haq, 2011; Maccoby & Scudder, 2011).

### **Conceptual Skills: (Critical Thinking Skills, Strategic Skills, Research Skills)**

One of the most important skills an administrator can have is the ability to adapt. Priorities and policies often change rapidly in the public sector, so it is essential that staff have the ability to work with new information and adapt accordingly. Conceptual skills provide staff with the ability to think dynamically about various, complex situations. These skills enable managers and leaders to gather, dissect, and organize data in order to plan and solve abstract problems and issues. In ever-changing internal and external environments, conceptual abilities provide administrators with resources to effectively plan and foresee patterns within the various systems that they work. In order to effectively evaluate problems and interpret regulations, government employees need to apply critical thinking skills as they interact with the public and their peers. These critical thinking skills are also necessary for employees when they are asked to develop plans, complete assignments, and when working on special projects. Critical thinking skills are those that enable staff to analyze an array of situations in order to make the best possible decision. If/when system failures occur, administrators must have the strategic skills to know what to do next, and the ability to find the right solution to the problem. They must take a strategic approach by considering

potential consequences, not only for system failures but also the solutions that they propose. Research skills are also essential in order to find as much relevant information as possible on the issue or task at hand. As such, public administrators need to know where to look to find solutions to their problems. Research helps public administrators to determine what others in the field are doing as they tackle the similar issues, and also sheds light on what has been done in the past, and how and why it worked or did not work (Haq, 2011; Mumford, et.al., 2007).

### **Professional Communication Skills: (Interpersonal Skills, Social Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence)**

Regardless of the program or agency, professional communication (both written and verbal) is essential in any workplace setting. Communication is vital in order to effectively coordinate the needs and goals of various stakeholders (elected officials, other agencies, citizens, customers). One of the main duties of a public administrator is communicating with and listening to stakeholder and constituent concerns. Stakeholders typically promote various and often conflicting agendas that ultimately need to be addressed in some way. Public administrators need the social skills necessary to negotiate, motivate, influence, and, when appropriate, gather support to meet stakeholders' needs. Therefore, it is also essential that public administrators be wary of cultural differences in order to effectively interact with diverse groups, and do so in ways that they can understand. They must also be able to reconcile differences among the various perspectives that they will face. With so many perspectives also come a range of emotions and behaviors that administrators must work with and around in order resolve conflicts (Haq, 2011; Mumford, et.al., 2007; Maccoby & Scudder, 2011; Shevchenko, 2016).

Emotional intelligence is another aspect of professional communication skills. Emotional intelligence involves a deeper level of the understanding and management of emotions, which are

both necessary for effective project management. Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to perceive and understand emotions, the ability to use emotion in order to facilitate thinking, and the ability to manage one's own emotions and those of others. One must be able to hone in on this emotional management skill in order to become effective communicators, better team players, more self-aware and self-regulating, and better crisis managers, which in the end leads to better decision making (Haq, 2011; Clarke, 2010).

Public administrators play many roles, and the ability to be flexible is important when acting within various constructs and contexts. Social intelligence is the ability to determine which role to play and when. Wiig (2002) refers to public administrators as drivers, enablers, and facilitators. Drivers stimulate action; enablers provide direction for action; and facilitators provide support for actions. They must use various mechanisms (elements and processes) in order to make the best, informed decisions possible. Maccoby & Scudder (2011) describe four different leadership personalities, including the caring (altruistic-nurturing) leader, the visionary (assertive-directing) leader, the exacting (analytical-autonomizing) leader, and the adaptive (flexible-cohering) leader. Each personality brings about a different side of a leader. Social intelligence is a skill that effective leaders have that allow them to behaviorally adjust and readjust in any given situation. In sum, interpersonal skills can make or break many organization initiatives (Haq, 2011; Mumford, et.al., 2007; Maccoby & Scudder, 2011; Shevchenko, 2016).

### **Business Skills: (Prioritization/Organization, Time Management, Public Budgeting)**

Many government activities resemble those of the private sector. The programs and operations that public-sector agencies provide are often immersed within large and complex systems, replete with policy and procedure, and involve a vast number of employees, technology, and equipment

(McCurdy, 1978). Government constantly struggles to become and remain economical, efficient, and effective. Agency administrators must continuously work to reduce costs, increase productivity, and provide quality goods and services to the public. This is often difficult to accomplish given the unique environments and numerous factors that surround government agencies, including bureaucracy, increased governance, globalization, ever-changing priorities, laws and regulations, as well as competition for resources (Ziemba & Oblak, 2013).

Government managers and leaders often work within budgetary limitations, and are constantly expected to do more with less, all while continuously looking for ways to improve. It is therefore necessary for public administrators to be able to assess and analyze their needs, motivate and rally others for support of their needs, and effectively manage and spend their available budgets in order to (at least minimally) satisfy those needs. They must ensure that their department(s) have enough technology, equipment, people, and funds to function at their necessary levels. These skills involve the ability to organize, prioritize, effectively manage their time, and appropriately budget and make wise choices when allocating their limited resources (Mumford, et.al., 2007).

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As public employees move up the ranks of their organizations, they need to be better equipped for the job. The greater the responsibility, the more advanced and refined their skills need to be (Mumford, et.al., 2007). Organizations can no longer afford to train employees using traditional training techniques because 21<sup>st</sup> century governance no longer resembles the traditional Wilsonian view of the public (executive) agency. And with most government agencies existing in what can be a perpetual state of financial and budget crises, they need to make wise spending decisions.

Leadership development and training, therefore, is an important piece of the public sector employee's education (Seidle & Fernandez, 2016).

## **Recruitment and Retention**

When employees believe their organization cares about their well-being, they are likely to remain with that organization longer. Koster, de Grip, & Fouarge (2011) refer to this notion as “perceived support in employee development” (PSED), and define it as an employee's perceptions of their employer's support in their (personal and professional) development. According to the social exchange theory, when employees feel that their organization (employer) genuinely values and supports them, they will reciprocate and work harder for the organization. PSED is related to social exchange theory, suggesting that increased employee perceptions of support increases job satisfaction and reduces an employee's likelihood of quitting his or her job. Employer investments in employee training and development benefit the organization by having a more educated workforce at its disposal and for a longer period of time (Koster, et.al., 2011).

Public service motivation (PSM) also helps draw individuals to the public sector. PSM is defined as an individual's altruistic calling to public service work. Research has shown that employees in the public sector have higher levels of PSM (Steijn, 2008). People are attracted to government work because it is challenging and meaningful (Henry, 2013 p.63). Others are drawn to government work because of the values that the sector represents. Employees with higher levels of PSM exhibit greater levels of organizational commitment. It is therefore important for public sector organizations to ensure their workers know that their contributions are valuable to their agency, and that the work they do is contributing to their mission. By doing so, organizations can improve employee loyalty and commitment, and ultimately keep them working there longer (Steijn, 2008; Lewis & Frank, 2002).

Although PSM can draw interest to the public sector, organizations need to do more to attract quality employees. The discretionary benefits that they offer can assist with both recruitment and retention (Pynes, 2009 p. 289). One such benefit is to offer educational assistance to their employees. This would be considered a human capital investment, and is also one of the most important investments an employer can make. An educational investment leads to greater knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies of employees. Investments in human capital should not be viewed only as costs to an agency, because these investments ultimately benefit the organization. Some of these benefits include better performance, increased employee loyalty, and reduced turnover (Pynes, 2009; Marimuthu, Arokiaamy, & Ismail, 2009).

Agencies can begin by identifying high-potential employees and providing them with an education in public administration, namely the MPA. MPA programs provide the knowledge and skills that managers and leaders need for work in the “New Public Service” (Oldfield, 2017). These programs do not just train; they educate. MPA programs expose students to current government and public affairs, and the challenges facing public administrators. They provide coursework in public policy, theory, economics, administrative law, strategic planning, governance, and other areas of applied curriculum. Students learn through research, networking with others, project management, hands-on practice, and professors who work within the various sectors that public administrators work with on a daily basis (Holmes, 2012; Oldfield, 2017; Nygaard & Bramming, 2008).

Providing employees such an education can also be seen as a succession plan (Holmes, 2012). Pynes (2009) highlights the importance of succession planning, especially for the public sector. The current workforce of most organizations consists of baby-boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1980), and millennials (born between 1980



and 2002) (Pynes, 2009 p. 25). The later Baby Boomers have now reached retirement age and will be exiting the workforce in mass numbers, followed by Generation Xers, many of whom are approaching retirement age. This anticipated loss in skill and institutional knowledge, suggests human resource managers need to be aware of their organization's employment needs. Human resource managers must assess which employees have the skills to fill newly-opened positions, and whether or not employees can be found within the organization or if they will have to recruit talent from outside the agency. Dougherty & Van Gelder (2015) argue that government agencies should attempt to fill these spots with people who already have experience in the public sector because these employees already have much of the organizational knowledge needed and it saves already cash-strapped public agencies from expending limited funds on additional training and development. Wiig (2002) discusses a similar strategy called “knowledge management,” which is a systematic way to develop, share, and retain intellectual capital. Human resource managers should look to create, maintain, and leverage intellectual capital within their organization whenever possible through providing educational opportunities, ongoing trainings, and advancement opportunities to employees (Pynes, 2009; Wiig, 2002; Henry, 2013).

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In conclusion, government needs to be able provide the public with the policies, goods, and services they need and have come to expect, and to do so in creative and innovative cost-efficient/effective ways. In order to accomplish these feats, agency leaders need to be proactive, rather than reactive and progressive rather than regressive.

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

To assess the benefits of the EEP, it was necessary that the evaluation team gather information from those that are/were involved with the program, including stakeholders and participants. The idea behind the study was to gather as much information as possible about what the program offers to those that participate and how the agency is benefiting from the education that it is sponsoring. The evaluation team was interested in finding out what skills and knowledge sets these participants and graduates are obtaining and how they are applying these newly-acquired or better developed competencies within the scope of their job duties.

It was originally the intent of the evaluators to interview and survey all (or as many as possible) current participants and former graduates of the program. This group includes those that are currently participating or have already graduated who are still currently working at ECDSS [herein referred to as participants], as well as those that have since retired from service [herein referred to as retirees]. Although interviews would have been ideal for both of these groups, it should be noted that surveys were always intended for retirees for convenience and time-saving purposes. With that said, the researchers also intended to interview a sample of supervisors and administrators [herein referred to as supervisors] from various departments within the agency, including some of which whom are/were these participants' supervisors. However, due to the lack of responses received from participants for such interviews, it was decided that surveys were the most convenient option available for this group, as well as for the supervisors. Although some interviews were held with those who accepted the request for an interview, many named time restrictions/constrictions as their reason for declining the request. It was inferred that the same issue would arise when attempting to interview supervisors. The decision was then made to perform as many interviews as possible with participants and develop a survey around the

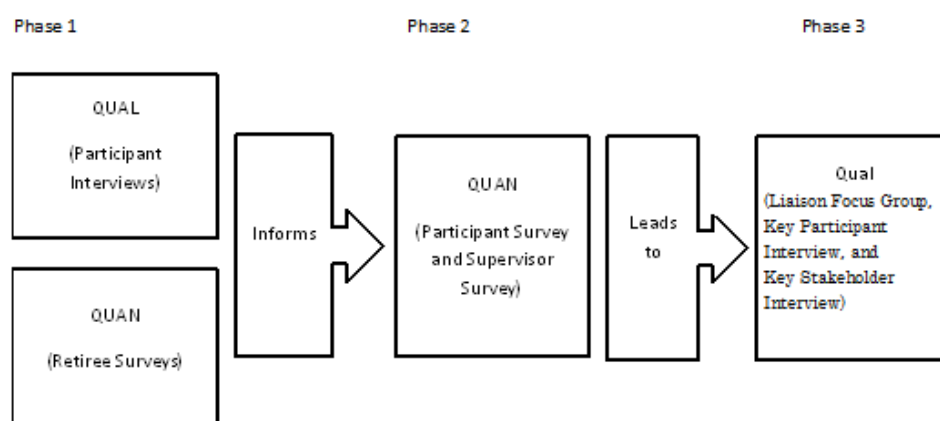
information obtained from this group. A survey was also developed for a sample of supervisors/administrators within the agency. It too was developed in conjunction with the interviews obtained from participants. Although more detailed information can be abstracted from interviews, surveys are convenient, time-efficient, and offer real-time results, making them the most ideal option given the circumstances.

## **Study Design**

This study is an evaluation of the ECDSS Employee Education Program, and as such, the evaluation focused on gathering information from those who are directly or indirectly involved with the program. Therefore, no control group was used in this evaluation. A multiphase mixed methods design was utilized for the purposes of this evaluation (see Figure 1). This design was selected because it offered the most flexibility to the evaluation team, allowing them to adjust their data collection methods as the study progressed. Given the time constrictions of most ECDSS employees, the evaluators decided to use a variety of data collection tools in order to gather as much information as possible from those involved in the program. This design also allowed the research team to collect and analyze data, and add more components as they saw fit. The design began by concurrently gathering both qualitative data (interviews with participants) and quantitative data (retiree surveys). Since the response rates from both groups were less than desirable, the researchers began a second phase of concurrent quantitative data collection (participant surveys and supervisor surveys). The survey questionnaires used in this second phase were designed around the responses gathered from the retiree surveys and participant interviews. Once phases 1 and 2 were complete, the researchers added one last phase (3) of qualitative data collection (liaison focus group, key EEP participant interview, key stakeholder interview). The

idea behind these three phases was to gather as much information about the program as possible from current and past participants and compare/contrast it to what supervisors/managers deem important for leadership positions at ECDSS. These results would then be compared to the goals of the program, as well as to the concerns of stakeholders.

*Figure 1 Multi-phase Mixed Methods Design*



## Phase 1

### Qualitative Phase

#### *Participant Interviews*

The research team was interested in learning the skillset learned/developed through the EEP/MPA, if this skillset was being utilized in the agency, how participants are performing in the agency, and whether the EEP is meeting its goals. The researchers were also interested in finding out the reasons why employees chose to enroll in the EEP-MPA, as well as determine whether participation in the EEP-MPA has influenced the employee's decision to remain working at

ECDSS. Interviews were deemed the best strategy to gain this sort of detailed information. Table 1 provides a list of participant interview questions.

*Table 1 Participant Interview Questions*

-Name
-Sex
-Age
-Current job grade
-Job title when began program
-Date started EEP
-Date/Expected date of completion
1. When did you begin working for ECDSS?
1A. What motivated you to begin working with ECDSS?
1B. What was your level of education when you began?
2. What was your position with ECSS when you started?
2A. Job grade?
2B. Was this a supervisory position?
2C. What were the job requirements for that job?
3. How did you find out about the EEP, and had you worked for Erie County in another department prior to starting in ECDSS?
4. What motivated you to apply for admittance to the program?
4A. If program standards changed, and the program began requiring that you remain working for ECDSS for a pre-determined specified amount of time after obtaining your degree, would you have still applied for admittance to the program? How would you perceive this standard, and do you consider it a reasonable expectation?
5. What were your expectations both personally and professionally before you began the program?
5A. After you completed the program, had these expectations been met? If you have not yet completed the program, what do you expect after completion?
6. What type of skills do you believe you developed through your participation in the program?
7. During your participation in the program, and after completion of the program, were you able to apply the skills you learned on the job? Do you have any recommendations for how you can apply these skills?
7A. Were you able to apply these skills in your personal life?
8. Do you believe your job performance at ECDSS has improved due to your participation and in what ways?
9. After completing the MS-HSA/MPA program, have you or would you consider leaving your employment at ECDSS? Why or why not, and under what circumstances would you consider leaving? Has your participation in the program influenced you to stay at ECDSS and how?
10. Were you ever involved with special projects, initiatives, or work process redesigns while enrolled or after you completed the program? How did you find out about these projects? If you had an opportunity, would you be interested in getting more involved with such initiatives?
10A. If you have participated, what were you involved in and what were the outcomes?
B. Can you provide details, such as final reports, for any of these initiatives?
11. In retrospect, what difference has the program made in your work at ECDSS?
12. How many advanced positions have you held since completing the program, or since beginning the program? Do you believe that your degree has helped you obtain these positions? Do you feel the County can do more to highlight the skills you have gained through your participation?
13. Through participation in the program, which professional skills were developed that are essential to your job and how have you applied those skills?
14. What courses in the MS-HSA/MPA did you find most beneficial?
15. What type of training would you have liked to have available that isn't/wasn't part of your MS-HSA/MPA program?
16. Would you have preferred to attend classes at a downtown location (43 Court) rather than at the Buffalo State Campus?
17. What type of classroom activities would you liked to have had more of in the MS-HSA/MPA program? How would this add value to the courses?
18. Now that you have completed the program (or continue to work on your degree) how would you prefer to continue learning and communicating with fellow MS-HSA/MPA program participants?
19. What suggestions do you have regarding the administration of the program?

## Quantitative Phase

### *Retiree Surveys*

Although retirees no longer work at the agency, the researchers still wanted to determine the skillset developed through their participation in the EEP-MPA program and if/how the skills were utilized within the scope of their job duties when they were employed at the agency. The evaluators agreed that surveys were the best option available for this group. Retirees were mailed a survey consisting of nineteen (19) questions (see Table 2).

*Table 2 List of Retiree Survey Questions*

-Job grade when hired
-Job grade when retired
1. The opportunity to enroll in this program influenced my decision to obtain employment with ECDSS.
2. I enrolled in this program anticipating that the knowledge that I acquired would enhance my job performance.
3. I enrolled in this program anticipating it would assist me with advancement at ECDSS.
4. My acceptance into this program was a factor in continuing employment with ECDSS.
5. I considered leaving ECDSS after I completed the MS-HSA/MPA program.
6. the skills I learned in the MS-HSA/MPA program helped me to improve my job performance.
7. the skills I learned in the MS-HSA/MPA program assisted me in my community activities.
8. I believe ECDSS Supervision and Administration were aware of the skills I obtained through the MS-HSA/MPA program.
9. I was provided opportunities to apply the MS-HSA/MPA skills in my positions at ECDSS.
10. As a result of completing this degree I had more promotional opportunities.
11. As a result of completing this degree I believe my suggestions at ECDSS were better articulated.
12. As a result of completing the MS-HSA/MPA program I was better able to serve my customers.
13. As a result of completing the MS-HSA/MPA degree I had a better understanding of the ECDSS mission and objectives.
14. As a result of completing the MS-HSA/MPA degree I had more confidence interacting with supervisors and administrators.
15. My suggestions for change were better conveyed to ECDSS administration after completing the MS-HSA/MPA degree.
16. Overall, my professional life has benefited from the skills and knowledge I acquired through the MS-HSA/MPA program.
17. I would have found it more beneficial to attend classes at a downtown location (43 Court) rather than the Buffalo State campus.
18. I would like to have had an opportunity to take additional training classes and communicate with other MS-HSA/MPA participants.
19. Do you have any other comments not addressed in this survey regarding the MS-HSA/MPA program?

## Phase 2

### Quantitative Phase

#### *Participant Survey*

To receive more feedback about the program, the evaluation team developed a survey for participants to supplement the information gathered during the interviews. The survey questions (see Table 3) were built around the responses that were provided during the interviews in Phase 1. The topics for the questions are centered around determining the skillset acquired or better developed through participation in the EEP-MPA, if these skills are being used on the job, and how the agency can better utilize these workers and their skills. The survey consisted of twenty-two (22) questions and were emailed to all participants and graduates of the EEP-MPA, including those who were already interviewed.

*Table 3 List of Participant Survey Questions*

1. I began/continue working for ECDSS because I want to help serve my community in a meaningful way.
2. Participation in the EEP has influenced my decision to remain working for ECDSS.
3. I participated/am participating in the Employee Education Program so that I can be a better worker within the agency.
4. I participated/am participating in the Employee Education Program so that I can advance in my career at ECDSS.
5. If EEP standards changed, and the program began requiring that you remain working for ECDSS for a specified amount of time after receiving your degree, would you still have applied for admittance into the program?
6. As a result of this degree, I believe that I have/will have more promotional opportunities within the Agency.
7. Completion of the MS-HSA/MPA degree program through Buffalo State College has provided me with the necessary skills needed in order to lead and manage others towards the goals of the agency.
8. I am able to apply the skills gained through the MS-HSA/MPA program in my personal life.
9. I am able to apply the skills that I have gained through the MS-HSA/MPA degree program in my current job within the agency.
10. I would like a position in the agency where I can utilize the skills that I have learned through participation in the EEP.
11. My job performance at ECDSS has improved because my participation in the EEP.
12. I am better able to work with others (co-workers, supervision, customers, members of the community, stakeholders) because of my participation in the EEP.
13. ECDSS Supervision and Administration are aware of the skills that I have gained through my participation in the EEP.

14. My supervisor utilizes the skills, knowledge, and experience I have gained through the EEP for department initiatives.
15. The County provides me with opportunities to utilize the skills I have gained through my participation in the EEP.
16. I am interested in becoming more involved in County/department initiatives, special projects, and work redesigns.
17. I am satisfied with the position I currently have at ECDSS AND the degree that I have earned through the Employee Education Program.
18. I would consider outside employment for a position that utilizes the skills I have gained through my participation in the EEP.
19. I am satisfied with the way the EEP is administered by both County and Buffalo State College Administrations.
20. I would like to continue learning and communicating with fellow MS-HSA/MPA program participants and graduates.
21. I would have preferred classes in a downtown location (for example, 43 Court St). **This would only include students from ECDSS.
22. The skills I gained through my participation in the MS-HSA/MPA degree program include: (Please choose all that apply) -Critical Thinking Skills -Professional Communication Skills -Better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("Big Picture View") -Time Management Skills -Public Budgeting Skills -Research Skills -Organizational/Prioritization Skills
Additional Comments or Suggestions regarding the EEP (Improvements, Favorite Classes/Classroom Activities, Additional Training Suggestions, etc.

### *Supervisor Survey*

A survey was emailed to supervisors and consisted of twenty-four (24) questions (Table 4). The evaluation team sought to gain information regarding supervisors'/administrators' perceptions of how the EEP benefits the agency, its employees, and the community. The survey was also designed to assess their awareness of the skills gained by participants, as well as what skills they deem important for supervisors and administrators. A list of questions asked on the survey can be found in Table 4.



Table 4 List of Supervisor Survey Questions

-Job grade and title
1. I believe that the Employee Education Program is a valuable program to ECDSS and its employees.
2. I believe that the Employee Education Program benefits the community because it provides employees with an advanced education in public administration and public policy.
3. I believe that the MS-HSA/MPA degree program, sponsored by the ECDSS Employee Education Program, helps provide employees with the skills they will use at ECDSS.
4. I have directly or indirectly supervised a participant of the MS-HSA/MPA program.
5. I am aware of the skills that employees gain through their participation in the MS-HSA/MPA program.
6. Employees that have participated in the MS-HSA/MPA are able to apply their skills, knowledge, and experience in their current job.
7. I (would) recommend employees that have participated in the MS-HSA/MPA program for department/county initiatives, work redesigns, and special projects.
8. Participants/graduates of the MS-HSA/MPA program are better able to work with others (co-workers, supervisors, customers/representatives, members of the community, stakeholders) because of their participation in the program.
9. The MS-HSA/MPA degree program, sponsored by the Employee Education Program, has improved the performance of participants that I supervise.
10. When I interview applicants, I take into consideration whether or not they have a degree.
11. An MS-HSA/MPA degree stands out when I am interviewing applicants interested in joining my department.
12. I would NOT recommend the MPA program to all employees in my department.
13. If a supervisory/administrative position opened in my department, I would recommend one of my employees that graduated with an MS-HSA/MPA degree.
14. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee with an understanding of how government agencies must adapt to various internal and external environments.
15. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee with organizational, prioritization, and time management skills.
16. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee with well-developed and professional communication skills (written and verbal).
17. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that has participated in leadership/management training courses or classes.
18. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that is able to effectively communicate with others (co-workers, subordinates, supervisors, customers/representatives, stakeholders).
19. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that has taken public budgeting courses.
20. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that can effectively research and interpret data.
21. I would prefer to hire an applicant that already works within the agency and is familiar with its culture, programs/services, and computer systems.
22. I believe that employees that choose to participate in the EEP are dedicated to working at ECDSS.
23. I am satisfied with the way that the EEP/MPA program is administered by the County.
24. Please list any skills (or other requirements) that you deem important for supervisors/administrators to have for work here at ECDSS.

## Phase 3

### Qualitative Phase

#### *EEP Liaison (Agency and College) Focus Group*

To determine whether the goals of the EEP-MPA are being met, the evaluation team held a focus group discussion with the designated EEP liaison from ECDSS and the former MPA Division Director at SUNY Buffalo State<sup>4</sup>. The group discussed the goals and expectations of the EEP from both the point of view of ECDSS as well as SUNY Buffalo State. The information gained from these interviews will be compared to the results of the participant interviews and surveys, the retiree surveys, and the supervisor surveys. Below are the topics discussed during the focus group (Table 5, Focused Discussion).

*Table 5 EEP Liaison Focused Discussion Topics*

Goals of the program: ECDSS EEP and SUNY Buffalo State College MPA
Skills that the program aims to provide employees and students
How do we know if goals are being met? ECDSS EEP and SUNY Buffalo State College MPA
What would be considered a success from each point of view?
Are there any obstacles in the way of attaining goals and how can they be overcome?
Program Evaluations: ECDSS EEP and SUNY Buffalo State College
How are participants chosen?
How are supervisors involved in the process?
What sets EEP/MPA apart from other leadership training and development initiatives?
What improvements could be made from both sides?

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<sup>4</sup> Dr. Laurie Buonanno is a former Department Chair of the Political Science Department at SUNY Buffalo State College (2006-2012) and a member of the three-person faculty team who established the MPA program. She also served as the MPA (2013-May, 2017).

### *Key Participant Interview*

An interview was conducted with the First Deputy Commissioner of Social Services<sup>5</sup> (Erie County), who was also sponsored by the EEP for a brief period. Although she did not participate in the EEP throughout her entire MPA experience, she is still considered a participant of the program because she was enrolled in the program until she graduated. She is also considered a key participant because she is a high ranking public administrator at ECDSS who graduated from SUNY Buffalo State<sup>6</sup> through sponsorship of the EEP. During the interview, we discussed key skills developed through her MPA experience and the skills most used in her job. Table 6 contains the full list of questions discussed during the interview.

*Table 6 Key Participant Interview Questions*

Do you feel the program is valuable to ECDSS, and why?
What skills did you walk away with?
What are some key skills used on the job?
What are your job duties?
Do you feel education is important for public sector employees and public administrators?

### *Key Stakeholder Interview*

An interview was also conducted with the Second Deputy Commissioner of Social Services<sup>7</sup> (Erie County). This evaluation team will use this information when analyzing the data, as well as offering recommendations (Chapter V). Below (Table 7) is the list of interview questions.

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<sup>5</sup> Sharon Rochelle is currently the First Deputy Commissioner of Social Services. Prior to becoming First Deputy Commissioner, she held the title of Second Deputy Commissioner. She joined ECDSS after leaving her position as Director of Family Services at Pinnacle Charter School.

<sup>6</sup> Sharon Rochelle was privately paying for her MPA degree prior to her enrollment in the EEP-MPA. She completed her MPA at SUNY Buffalo State in December 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Mary Ellen Brockmyre is the current Second Deputy Commissioner of Social Services. Prior to her employment at Social Services, she worked with Community Services for the Developmentally Disabled.

*Table 7 Key Stakeholder Interview Questions*

What are the goals of the program?
Do you believe the goals are being met?
Do you have concerns regarding the EEP?
How do you feel these concerns can be addressed?

## **Sample Selection and Description of Participants**

### **The Lists**

The ECDSS Human Resource Department/EEP liaison provided the evaluation team with multiple participant lists. These compilations were a major source of information for the evaluators and they contained pertinent data that were needed in order to perform this evaluation. They included information pertaining to current and past participants of the EEP, including names, employment status (active/inactive), graduation dates, and degree concentration (MPA vs. MDS). Other lists provided information that indicated any promotions that these employees received during or after graduation. Although these lists contained useful information, some of the lists did not match others that were provided, which presented challenges for the evaluation team in identifying potential study participants.

### **Participants (Current, Graduate, Retiree)**

The evaluators determined here 16 employees currently working towards their degree and 72 graduates. Of those that have graduated, 26 are still employed at the agency. The remaining graduates either retired (33 known), resigned (1), went to another County department (1), or have an unknown employment status (11). When all of the lists were compared, none of those with an unknown employment status were found on the "active employee" lists and all graduated from the

EEP-MDS between 1989 and 2004 (prior to the establishment of SUNY Buffalo State's MPA in 2011). Although these "unknowns" can be presumed to have retired from service, they were stricken from consideration of this evaluation, along with those two others whom are no longer employed at ECDSS. Two other names were removed from the retiree sample because they are deceased. Table 8 below represents the populations and samples used in the evaluation.

*Table 8 Population and Sample*

Category	Current Participants	Graduates Still Employed at ECDSS	Retirees (known)	Resigned/Other County Dept./ Unknown	Total EEP (MPA) Participants (Past and Present)
Population	16	26	33	13	88 <sup>8</sup>
Sample	15	25	29 <sup>9</sup>	0	69

## Supervisors

The evaluators relied on internal staff listings to select supervisors to be surveyed for this evaluation. All departmental staff listings were printed. The majority of those selection were randomly selected while a small number were chosen for convenience. A varied number of supervisors (job grade 10 and above) were chosen from each department within ECDSS, with the exception of the Department of Personnel and the Office of Legal Affairs. A total of 23 supervisors were chosen from a population size of 166.<sup>10</sup> Their job titles ranged from Head Social Welfare Examiner (job grade 10) to Executive Director of Family Independence (job grade 16). Table 9 shows the distribution of job grades and agency departments utilized in the evaluation. It

<sup>8</sup> According to the lists, there were eight (8) others that began the MPA program, but did not complete the program. They were either dropped by the college, the department, or quit the program for personal reasons. They are not included in this population.

<sup>9</sup> The true sample size should be 31, however the evaluators were unable to find addresses for two known retirees.

<sup>10</sup> This number was provided by ECDSS Department of Personnel.

was later discovered that the majority (8/11) of survey respondents have directly or indirectly supervised an EEP participant.

*Table 9 Job Grades and Agency Departments*

Job Grade	10	11	12	13	15	16
Temporary Assistance			X X	X		
SNAP			X	X		
Services				X		
Employment		X				
Daycare		X				
Human Resources				X		
Public Health Insurance	X X X	X	X X	X		
Adult & Family Services				X		
Legal Advocacy for the Disabled					X	
Family Independence						X
Child Support				X		
Energy Program	X		X			
Special Investigation				X		

### **Key Participant and Key Stakeholder**

These two key figures were selected for an interview because of their close association with EEP. Both are high-ranking ECDSS administrators. The key participant finished her MPA while enrolled in the EEP and has first-hand knowledge of what skills administrators need at ECDSS. The key stakeholder has expressed legitimate concerns about the EEP-MPA program's impact on ECDSS.

### **Demographic Information**

Although some relevant demographic information was collected, the information that was gathered is sparse. Of particular interest is the ratio of female to male EEP participants. Of the total population (see Table 1), there are almost twice as many females that have participated in the EEP-

MPA. Females accounted for 66% of the total population. Females also outnumber males in all individual categories as follows: current participants, 10:6; graduates still employed, 20:6; and retirees, 18:15.

Of those (participants) interviewed, the majority (62.5%) were female, with an average age of 48.6 (range 34-61). Males (37.5%) had an average age of 42 (range 32-53). More than half (62.5%) have already graduated from the program, while the remaining participants (37.5%) are still enrolled. This group has been employed with ECDSS for an average of eleven (11) years.

The supervisor sample consisted of 17 females and six males. Of those that responded to the survey and provided job grades, the majority (67%) indicated that they were grade 12, which include such titles as Chief Examiners and Program Coordinators, followed by a smaller percentage (~17% each) of Head Examiners and Directors.

## **Data Collection and Instrumentation**

### **Participant Interviews**

An email request for an interview was sent (April, 2017) to 40 participants/graduates of the program using the ECDSS internal email system. Fifteen of these participants are currently active in the program and 25 have already graduated. Of these, only eight responded and consented to an interview. Three of these interviewees are still enrolled in the program, while the other five have since graduated. Each interview took place in a quiet area and conveniently located for the interviewee, with the exception of one telephone interview.<sup>11</sup> The 19 interview questions were read to the interviewee by the evaluators, and all responses were hand-written as close to verbatim

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<sup>11</sup> The interviewees had the option of a telephone interview or a face-to-face interview, based on personal preference.

as possible. Both members of the evaluation team were present for three of the eight interviews. Each interview took approximately one hour to conduct.

### **Retiree Surveys**

The survey mailed to retirees was developed using a Microsoft Word document. The survey included 19 questions, and utilized a Likert-scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), with 3 indicating a neutral feeling. Home addresses were provided by the ECDSS Personnel Department, although some were missing from the list. The evaluation team then conducted internet searches to obtain the missing addresses. Surveys were mailed (April, 2017) to the retirees with postage paid, pre-addressed return envelopes. Retirees were asked to return their surveys within two weeks. A total of eight (8) surveys were completed and returned. Nine (9) surveys were returned to the sender. All surveys were then transcribed and entered into the web platform Google Forms.<sup>12</sup>

### **Participant Surveys**

Participant surveys were also created using Google Forms. This survey consisted of 22 mainly Likert-scale questions. One (skills) question allowed multiple responses, and there was also a section to enter additional comments about the EEP-MPA. Respondents were asked to choose the answer that most closely related to how they feel about each question, on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with 3 indicating a neutral feeling. An email request was sent (May, 2017) via the ECDSS employee email system to 40 participants of the EEP-MPA. The emails contained a link to the survey. Participants were asked to complete the surveys within two

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<sup>12</sup> More information about Google Forms can be found at <https://www.google.com/forms/about/>.



weeks. The evaluation team received a 50% response rate, gathering information from 20 participants.

### **Supervisor Surveys**

Google Forms was also utilized for the supervisor surveys. The majority of the survey consisted of Likert-scale questions. There was also one multiple response question, whereby supervisors could only choose one response, as well as a short-answer question. Supervisors were sent an email (June, 2017) via the ECDSS internal employee email system, which contained a short explanation about the EEP along with a link to the survey. This group was asked to complete the survey within two weeks.

### **Liaison Focus Group**

An email request was sent to schedule this interview. The liaison focus group meeting took place in October, 2017. Both members of the evaluation team were present for this meeting, along with the ECDSS EEP liaison and the former MPA Program Director at SUNY Buffalo State. The group met for approximately two hours to discuss the goals of the EEP-MPA. The evaluation team took handwritten notes during this meeting.

### **Key Participant Interview**

An email request for an interview was sent to schedule this interview. It took place (October, 2017) in the office of the First Deputy Commissioner of Social Services (Erie County). The interview lasted approximately forty (40) minutes. One member of the evaluation team was not present for the interview. The evaluator that was present took hand-written notes during the interview.

**Key Stakeholder Interview**

An email request was sent via the ECDSS internal email system to schedule this interview. The key stakeholder interview took place in November, 2017. Both members of the evaluation team were present for the interview. This interview took approximately forty (40) minutes to conduct and was used to discuss concerns that ECDSS administration may have with the EEP-MPA.

During the interview, both members of the evaluation team took hand-written notes.

**Data Analysis**

Qualitative data gathered in Phase 3 of the evaluation was obtained in order to evaluate whether the EEP is attaining the goals set forth by the program's stakeholders. According to the ECDSS liaison, one of the main goals of the EEP is to increase employee professionalism at the agency. This professionalism includes better skills and knowledge that can be used at the agency. These include a "big picture view of government," with a better understanding of government issues. EEP participants/MPA students should be learning about the financial, political, and organizational environments of government agencies (specifically ECDSS) and how these factors affect how things get done. He asserted that, "Administration is the focus." ECDSS wants employees to "know what's going on, how government works, and why it is different than the other sectors." The EEP-MPA also exists to help employees advance within the agency (promotability). These promotions are seen as a cost-savings effort because of the amount of money that it costs to train new, incoming workers. As employees complete the program, they are expected (but not required) to remain working for the agency and to perform at or above the levels of those who have not participated in the program (increased performance). Participants are also expected to apply their

newly-acquired/better developed skills, knowledge, competencies, and experience within their jobs and also share it with those around them (knowledge sharing). They are also encouraged to take promotional exams (retention). As positions open up, there is a hope that these graduates will fill those positions (succession planning and knowledge management).

According to the SUNY Buffalo State liaison, of particular importance is that the MPA degree program (and Political Science Department as a whole) is contributing to the mission<sup>13</sup> of the college. Some specific goals to the program include "providing students with the technical, conceptual, and professional education skills that they will need when working in the public and non-profit sectors." These include understanding ethics, and the exercise of ethical decision making. MPA core classes teach students a range of skills including, but not limited to, cultural competency and diversity, public budgeting, public policy, research<sup>14</sup> (data collection, analysis, and presentation), cost-benefit analysis, human resource development, and many other specialized skills that are acquired through electives.

The purpose of the Key Participant interview was to establish what skills were acquired and developed from the MPA experience, and what skills are used most on the job. Although some of the skills were not newly acquired, they are needed at the agency. These include the understanding of politics and bureaucracy in government agencies and the systems and processes that exist within them. They also include research skills, keeping up on current public administration issues, and public budgeting. Some key skills used on the job (First Deputy Commission of Social Services) include:

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<sup>13</sup> "Buffalo State is a diverse and inclusive college committed to the intellectual, personal, and professional growth of its students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Our mission is to empower students to succeed and to inspire a lifelong passion for learning. Buffalo State is dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, service, scholarship, creative activity, and cultural enrichment" (SUNY Buffalo State, 2017).

<sup>14</sup> Heavy emphasis is placed on research skills. There is a 3-course sequence in research methods, data collection, data analysis, presentation of results, culminating in the final project (Capstone Experience – PAD 690).

- Networking and collaboration
- Communication skills
- Budgeting
- Cultural Competency
- Supervision and leadership in human services (parallel process)
- Emotional intelligence
- Human resource management (progressive discipline)
- Knowledge sharing
- Providing equal opportunities
- Program and process evaluation
- Evidence-based research

Education provides people with the skills sets and capabilities to adapt to their surrounding environments and provides experience to those who would not otherwise gain it in the workplace. Our key participant also asserted that "education should be mandatory for supervisors and public administrators."

During the key stakeholder interview, one of the main concerns expressed was the value that ECDSS is getting out of the EEP-MPA. Stakeholders want to ensure that ECDSS is gaining benefits from the educational program they are sponsoring. They are also concerned that upon degree completion, employees will leave the agency and seek employment elsewhere. If the agency is not gaining appreciable benefits from the program and employees are leaving the agency once they obtain their MPA, there are additional costs of needing to retrain new workers to take these employees' places. Although these concerns were made towards the whole EEP, it was inferred that the same concerns were expressed towards the MPA component.

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From the quantitative data gathered in Phases 1 and 2, similar questions from both the participant survey and the retiree survey were compared to the questions found on the surveys sent to supervisors and administrators at the agency. They were then triangulated and grouped into subject categories for evaluation purposes. The categories chosen include: job performance; benefit to community; obtainment of skills; use of skills; promotion; job retention; management recognition of skills; and program satisfaction. Once questions were assigned to a category, the results were compared and measured accordingly. For statistical purposes, the data gathered were also quantified by assigning numeric values for each Likert Scale response. "Strongly disagree" was assigned a value of one (1); "disagree" was assigned a value of two (2); "neutral" was assigned a value of three (3); "agree" was assigned a value of 4; and "strongly agree" was assigned a value of five (5). All triangulated responses (from retiree, participant, and supervisor surveys) were entered into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to calculate descriptive statistics for each question within the above-mentioned categories. These spreadsheets can be found in Appendices O, P, and Q. Below are the results of the triangulation process, along with a brief description of the subject categories.

### **Job Performance**

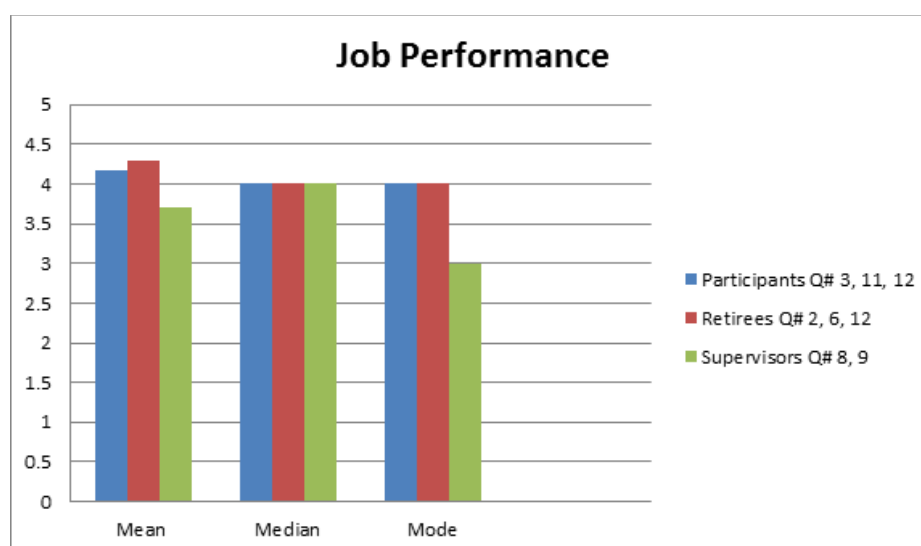
Employees participating in the EEP are expected to perform as well or better than those employees who are not part of the program. In order to measure the job performance of current participants and graduates of the program, respondents were asked to provide a self-assessment of their performance on the job. When asked, "I participated/am participating in the EEP so that I can be a better worker within the agency," 100% of respondents either agreed (55%) or strongly

agreed (45%) with this statement. When asked, "My job performance at ECDSS has improved because of my participation in the EEP," 20% strongly agreed, 60% agreed, and 20% neither agreed nor disagreed (felt neutral) with this statement. (During interviews, many participants said they felt they were already good performers within the agency prior to their participation in the program. This may offer some reasoning behind those that answered "neutral" to this statement.) When asked, "I am better able to work with others (co-workers, supervision, customers, member of the community, stakeholders) because of my participation in the EEP," 85% either agreed (55%) or strongly agreed (30%) with this statement.

Retirees were also asked for a self-assessment of their job performance from when they were still employed at the agency. When asked, "I enrolled in this program anticipating that the knowledge I acquired would enhance my job performance," 100% either agreed (50%) or strongly agreed (50%) with this statement. The majority of retiree respondents (87.5%) also confirmed that the skills they learned helped them perform better at the agency. Most retirees (87.5%) also indicated they were better able to serve their clients because of their participation in the EEP.

Supervisors agree (72.7%) that employees who participate/participated in the program "are better able to work with others (co-workers, supervisors, customers/representatives, members of the community, stakeholders) because of their participation in the program." They were evenly divided on whether or not these participants' performance had improved because of their participation in the program: fifty percent (50%) agreed while fifty percent (50%) felt neutral. When combined, supervisors had a mean score of 3.8 (out of 5) regarding the job performance of the employees that they supervise. This indicates that supervisors are slightly above neutral in a positive assessment of employees' skills obtained through the program.

Figure 2 Triangulation of Results – Job Performance



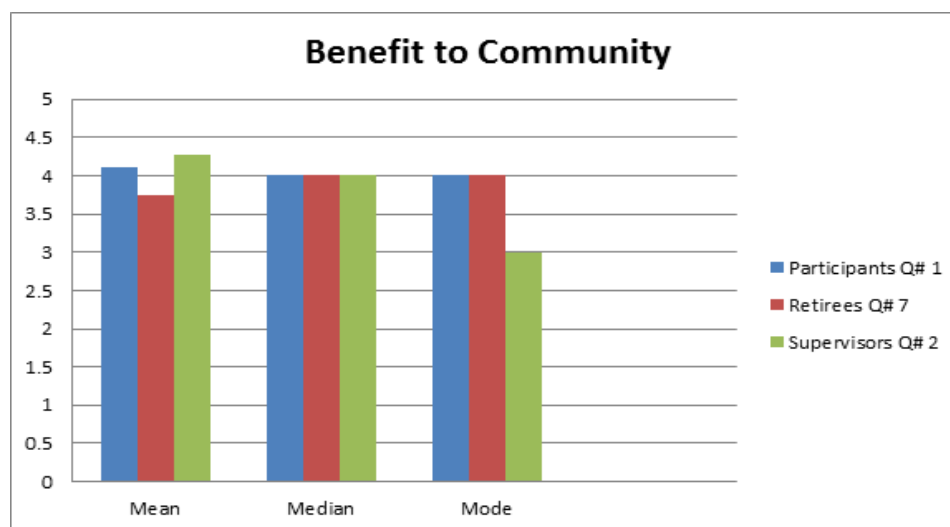
### **Benefit to Community**

Members of the community turn to ECDSS for a number of reasons, many of which are extremely personal and vital to their well-being. It should therefore be important that employees recognize that people are more than just numbers and names on case files. They should want to help make a difference in the community. Eighty five percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they began/continue to work for ECDSS because they want to serve their community in a meaningful way. Those (interviewees) who are active members in their community also indicated that they utilize the skills and knowledge gained from their participation in the program for these activities as well.

According to the retirees, more than half of the respondents (62.5%) agreed that their participation in the EEP program assisted them with their community activities, with the remaining respondents selected the neutral option.

Ninety-one percent of the participating supervisors believe that the EEP-MPA benefits the community because it provides employees with an advanced education in public administration and public policy. As shown in Figure 3 (below), a mean score of 4.2 from supervisors supports the notion that the program is making a contribution to the community.

*Figure 3 Triangulation of Results-Benefit to Community*



### **Skill Obtainment**

To evaluate the effectiveness of the program, it is necessary to know the skillset and knowledge participants gained from program participation. Ninety percent of the participants stated the MPA degree program provided them with the necessary skills needed to lead and manage others towards to goals of the agency. When broken down into the categories identified in the literature review (Chapter II), the following was found:

- **Technical skills:**

Of the 20 current participant respondents, more than half of them (63.2%) believed that they acquired a better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("big picture view"). In addition, during interviews, more than half of the interviewees (62.5%) noted that because of their participation in the program they now have a better understanding of their job, programs, and the organization's responsibilities. They also believe that they have a better understanding of public policy and how it affects ECDSS and other agencies. They reported



that they are also more politically conscious and informed about current government issues and agendas. One retiree also noted a similar response on his survey, indicating that he too developed an understanding of the functions of Social Services.

- **Conceptual skills:**

Of the participants, the majority of respondents (89.5%) believed they gained or improved their critical thinking skills from program participation. One interviewee also noted she has become more analytical about her work, and often looks for different ways to perform her duties more effectively and efficiently. The majority (84.2%) of participants also believed they gained or improved their research skills because of their participation in the EEP-MPA.

- **Interpersonal Skills:**

Of the 20 participant respondents, the majority (89.5%) believed they gained or improved their professional communication skills. Eighty percent also stated that they are better able to work with others (co-workers, supervision, customers, members of the community, stakeholders) because of their participation in the program. Also worth noting is that all interviewees expressed that because of their participation in the program, they believe they are better communicators, better team players/members/managers, and are more confident in themselves. One participant noted he can better handle himself emotionally when dealing with clients because of his participation in the program. Another indicated he is a more responsible, thoughtful worker. From the retiree survey, 75% felt their suggestions were better articulated following program participation. Seventy-five percent also indicated they felt more confident interacting with supervisors and administrators. It was also found that more than half (62.5%) of retirees felt their suggestions for change were better conveyed to ECDSS Administration after obtaining their MPA.

- **Business Skills:**

The majority of participant respondents, (89.5%), indicated that they improved their organizational/prioritization skills. More than half (52.6%) of participant survey respondents and all interviewees (100%) also believed they improved their time management skills. Throughout the interviews, the majority also discussed their success in effectively balancing their home and work lives because of their participation in the program. With regard to public budgeting, more than a quarter of participant respondents (26.3%) gained these skills.<sup>15</sup> During interviews, some also noted their improvement with statistics, while others wanted more public budgeting courses.

- **Leadership Skills:**

Of the current participants surveyed, the majority (84.2%) believe they obtained or improved upon their leadership and management skills due their participation in the program. Ninety percent indicated they developed the skills needed to lead and manage others towards agency goals. During one interview, for example, one recent graduate noted how she would like to see more decisions made around the ECDSS mission statement. If she had the opportunity

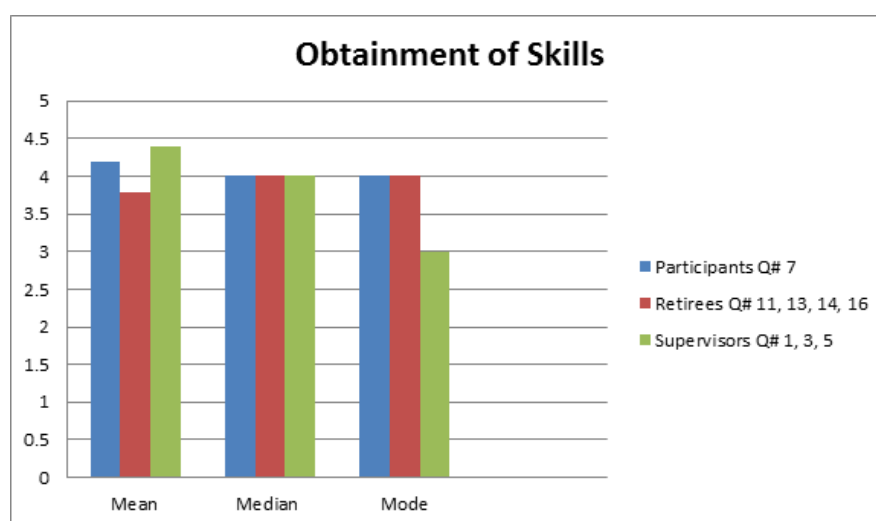
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<sup>15</sup> Public budgeting was not integrated into the MPA until 2014. It was not a component of those who graduated with an MS-HSA degree. It has since become a core class that all MPA students must take.

(got promoted), she would consistently look to the mission for guidance when performing her leadership duties and motivating others. More than half (62.5%) of the retirees also report developing a better understanding of the ECDSS mission and objectives. One retiree indicated that the program helped her perform her duties as both a first-line supervisor as well as a program director.

One hundred percent of the supervisor respondents agree that the MPA program provides ECDSS employees with skills they will use at the agency. The majority of supervisors also prefer employees that: understand how government agencies must adapt to various internal and external environments (81.8%); are organized, can prioritize, and have good time management skills (100%); have well-developed professional communication skills (100%); have taken leadership/management training courses or classes (90%); are able to effectively communicate with others (100%); can effectively research and interpret data (90.9%); and who already work for the agency and are familiar with the agency's culture, programs/services, and computer systems (80%). In the short answer section of the survey, supervisors also noted other preferences, including good time and attendance, the ability to follow deadlines, directives, and policies, the ability to adapt to change, use of common sense, and have the ability to resolve conflicts.

*Figure 4 Triangulation of Results - Obtainment of Skills*



### **Use of Skills**

Acquired skills are more valuable when they can be used. One hundred percent of current participant/graduates indicated they want a position in which they can apply the skills they have learned. When asked whether participants of the program are able to apply the skills they learned from the MPA program in their current jobs, ninety percent either agreed (60%) or strongly agreed (30%). The majority (84.2%) also agreed they are able to apply their skills in their personal lives as well.

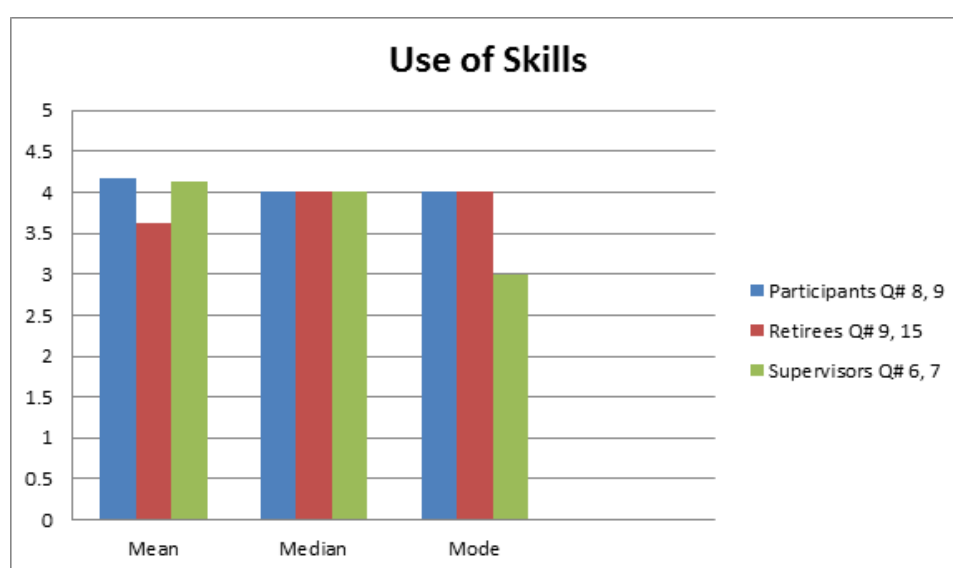
Although a very high number of respondents agreed they are able to use their skills on the job, much of the information gathered through interviews suggests the underutilization of the participants' skillsets. One interviewee noted his leadership and management skills are more "in reserve" as he cannot apply those skills and techniques in his current job. Worth noting is that sixty percent (60%) indicated that they would be interested in becoming more involved with County/department initiatives, special projects, and work redesigns. Others felt neutral (30%) or disagreed (10%) with this statement. One interviewee indicated through the interviews that "it would depend on what the projects were" and another stated that if she did work on side projects, "she'd like to see changes come about" afterwards.

Seventy-five percent of retirees indicated they were provided opportunities to apply their skills on the job. More than half (62.5%) also indicated their suggestions for change were better conveyed to ECDSS administration after completing the program. It should be noted that of those

retirees that responded, almost all of them were in management positions when they retired; one did not answer that question.

The majority (81.8%) of supervisor respondents indicated that EEP participants/graduates are able to apply the skills, knowledge, and experience that they obtained from the MPA degree program in their current jobs. Almost all respondents (90.9%) have also considered or would consider current participants and graduates for department/county initiatives, work redesigns, and special projects. When combined, these responses produced a mean score of 4.14, indicating that supervisors support the use of skills by program participants.

*Figure 5 Triangulation of Results - Use of Skills*



## **Promotion**

One goal of the EEP is to enhance employee promotability so that they can use the skills they have acquired throughout the agency. The program provides staff with an opportunity to be promoted to higher positions within the agency either by providing them with the resources to meet the education requirements of higher positions and/or by using education in lieu of experience.

According to the county lists, more than half (54.6%) of the EEP-MPA participants and retirees received promotions<sup>16</sup> either during their participation or after they completed the program. While most of these promotions were not to supervisor/administrator positions, some (34%) were. Some of those (interviewees) promoted have attributed this accomplishment to their degree and participation in the program. From the surveys, it was found that 100% of participants either agreed (20%) or strongly agreed (80%) that they are participating or have participated in the program so that they can advance in their careers at ECDSS. As a result of the MPA degree, 75% also believe they will have more promotional opportunities within the agency.

Retirees were asked to provide the job grade they had when they began employment at ECDSS and when they retired. According to the data provided, it was found that when averaged, each retiree received a promotion of 5.42 job grades during their career at ECDSS. It is unknown as to whether or not these promotions can be attributed to their successful completion of the EEP/MPA. Of the retirees surveyed, the majority (87.5%) agreed that they enrolled in the program anticipating that it would help them with advancement at ECDSS. Seventy five percent also believe they had more promotional opportunities because of their completion of the program, while the remaining 25% strongly disagreed with that statement.

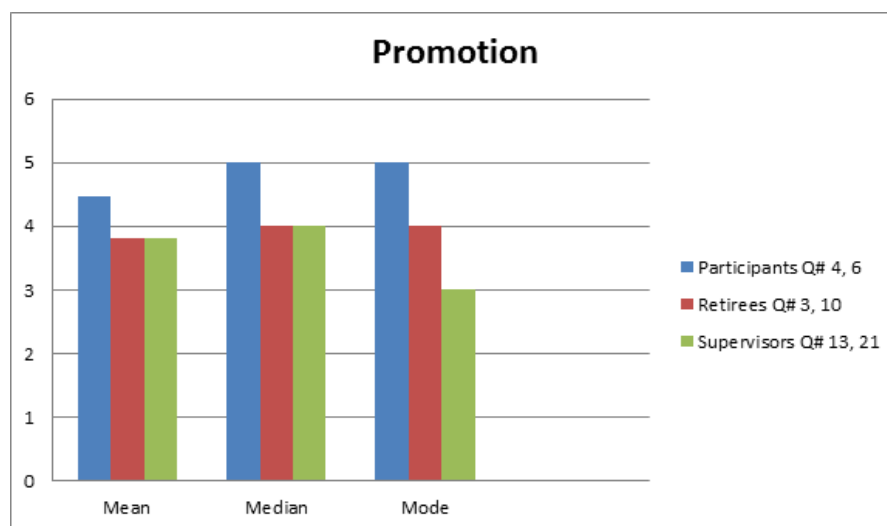
Supervisors seem divided on whether or not they would hire a participant of the program if a supervisory position opened in their department. A little over one half of respondents (54.6%) agreed they would recommend an employee within their department who graduated from the program for a supervisory position. Only a small percentage (9.1%) disagreed with this statement while the remaining supervisors (36.4%) felt neutral. Eighty percent agreed, however,

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<sup>16</sup> Many received more than one promotion.

agreed they would prefer to hire an applicant who already works within the agency and who is familiar with its culture, programs/services, and computer systems. One supervisor noted he would prefer to hire someone with "several years of experience in the private sector prior to working at ECDSS."

*Figure 6 Triangulation of Results - Promotion*



## **Job Retention**

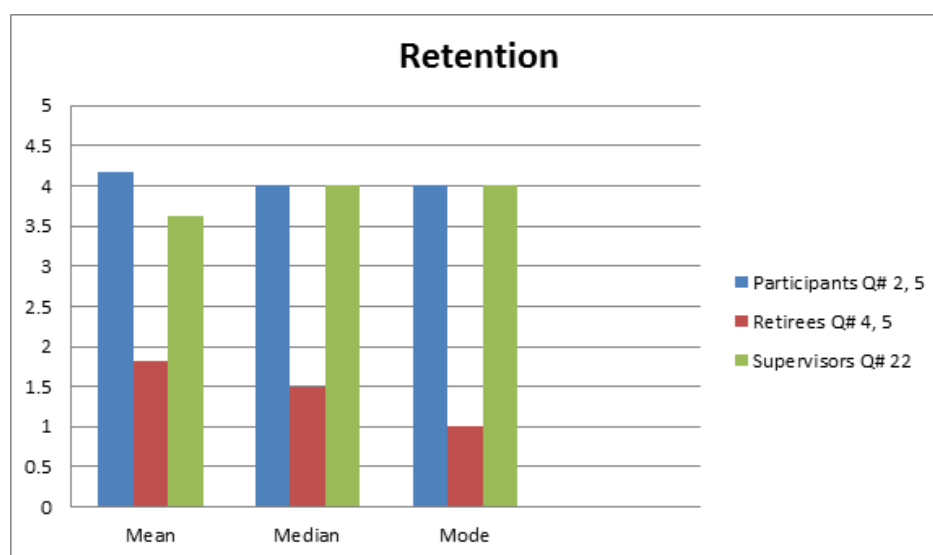
Stakeholders of the EEP have expressed concerns relating to the retention rates of participants and graduates of the program. Upon review of the data (lists) provided by the ECDSS Human Resource Division, since December 2005, it was found that only five MPA graduates left the agency. Of these, three (3) retired, one (1) resigned, and one (1) obtained employment in another Erie County department. The lists also provided graduation dates for most of the active ECDSS employees (24/26) that have graduated from the EEP. Using the information available, it was found that these employees have 300 combined years of service **post-graduation**. When averaged, each participant has remained employed at ECDSS for more than a decade (12.5 years) after graduating from the EEP, and continue to work in ECDSS.

Ninety five percent of participant survey respondents agreed (40%) or strongly agreed (55%) to the question, "If EEP standards changed, and the program began requiring that you remain working for ECDSS for a specified amount of time after receiving your degree, would you still have applied for admittance into the program?" In fact, 75% agreed that their participation in the program has influenced their decision to remain working at ECDSS. It should be noted however that many (65%) of the respondents from this group either agreed or strongly agreed that they would consider outside employment for a position that utilized the skills they have acquired.

Retiree respondents (62.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their participation in the program influenced their decision to remain working at ECDSS, while only a small percentage (12.5%) agreed with this statement. One retiree indicated that "although he was grateful for the opportunity, he began working at the county long before the program was established." This may offer some reasoning for the difference between retirees and those still employed. The program may have come into existence when these employees were already (financially and personally) vested in the agency. The majority (87.5%) of respondents also indicated that they did not consider leaving ECDSS employment after completing the program. In fact, one retiree stated that "the program is extremely important in keeping the agency's brightest and best employees at ECDSS."

Many supervisors (63.6%) believe that those employees who participate in the program are dedicated to working at ECDSS, while a smaller portion felt neutral (27.3%) or disagreed (9.1%) for a mean score of 3.72, indicating (on average) supervisors believe employees are participating in the program so that they can remain employed at ECDSS rather than look elsewhere for employment.

Figure 7 Triangulation of Results - Retention



### **Management Recognition of Skills**

Employees want to be recognized for their accomplishments in the workplace. Of the current participants/graduates, respondent results were rather inconsistent. About one third (35%) believe ECDSS Supervision and Administration are aware of the skills they gained, while approximately one third (30%) disagree with this statement. The remaining one third (35%) neither agreed nor disagreed (felt "neutral") regarding the recognition of the skills that they gained through the EEP. Similar results were noted regarding the opportunity to use of the skills, knowledge, and experience they acquired through program. Around one third (31.6%) agreed that their supervisors utilize their skills, while another one third (36.9%) disagreed. When it came to opportunities

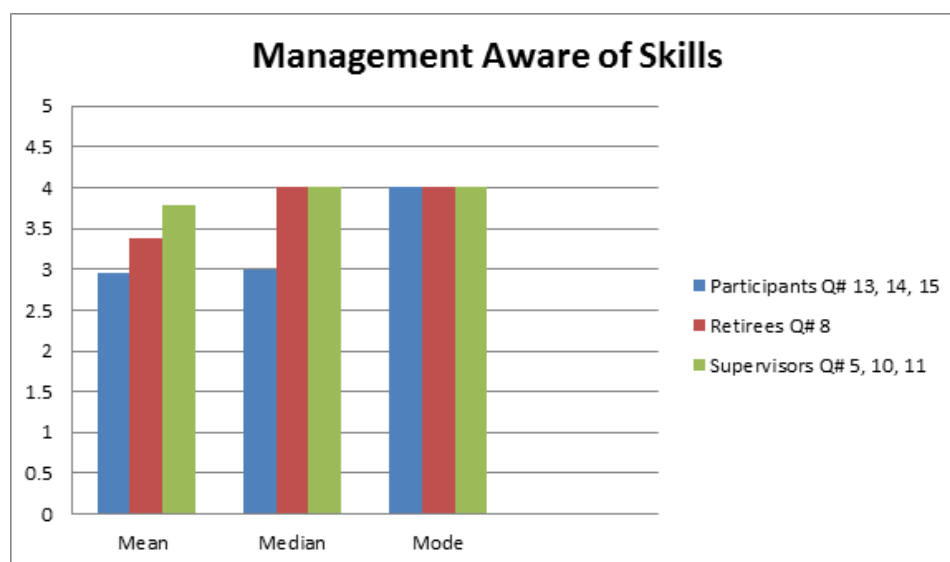


provided by the County, less than half (42.1%) agreed they are provided opportunities to utilize their skills, while the same percentage (42.1%) disagreed with this statement.

The retirees offered more consistent results, showing that more than half (62.5%) of these respondents agreed that they believed supervisors and administrators were aware of the skills they obtained from the program. Similarly, 75% indicated they were provided opportunities to use their skills in their jobs.

A little over one half (54.6%) of supervisors within the agency indicated they are aware of the skills employees gain from the MPA program. The majority (72.8%) also consider whether or not applicants have a degree when interviewing for a job with seventy percent (70%) agreeing or strongly agreeing that an MPA stands out.

*Figure 8 Triangulation of Results – Management Awareness of Skills*



### **Program Satisfaction**

Employees responded rather positively when asked about how their perceptions of the EEP and MPA programs. Seventy five percent indicated they are satisfied with the way the EEP is currently being administered by both ECDSS and SUNY Buffalo State. A smaller percentage (55%),

however, are satisfied with the position they currently have and the degree that they earned from their participation in the program. The majority (68%) also indicated they would like to continue learning and communicating with other EEP-MPA participants and graduates following program completion.

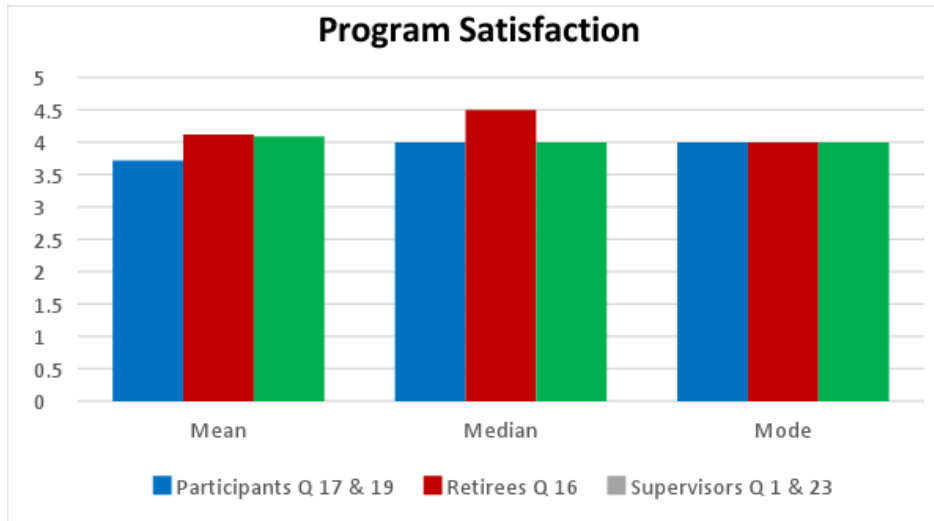
Respondents were also asked whether they would have preferred classes in a downtown location. This came with mixed reviews, showing 45% would have preferred a closer location, while the remaining 55% disagreed or felt neutral with this suggestion. Some other suggestions for improvements were made by participants. Some noted concerns of communication on both ends, including "lack of communication between advisors and students regarding progress towards degree requirements." There was also concern about the "lack of communication between students (employees) and EEP administrators at ECDSS." One interviewee stated that this evaluation was the "first communication he has had regarding the EEP since he graduated" from the program in 2004. Another expressed frustration about difficulty in getting her MPA project approved by ECDSS administration.

Retirees were also satisfied with the program. It was referred to as a "wonderful bonus," "rewarding," and "extremely beneficial." Compared to current participants and graduates, a smaller fraction (37.5%) would have liked to continue communicating and learning with others from the program following completion. When asked if they would have preferred to attend classes at a downtown location, the majority (75%) disagreed or felt neutral with this suggestion.

With regard to program satisfaction, supervisors within the agency were split on their satisfaction with the program. A little more than one half (54.6%) indicated they were satisfied with how the EEP/MPA programs are administered, while almost half (45.5%) felt neutral.

Supervisors typically do not have much interaction with how the program is administered, which may offer some insight into the lower levels of supervision satisfaction.

*Figure 9 Triangulation of Results - Program Satisfaction*



## **Chapter IV: Discussion of Results**

The data collected throughout this evaluation brought attention to many important issues and points concerning the MPA component of the EEP. One advantage of performing a multi-phase mixed methods evaluation is the amount of information the evaluators received from using a variety of data collection techniques. We were able to draw a very detailed picture about what skills and competencies were learned, which are most important for work at ECDSS, which skills are (or are not) being used, and what more could be done so that ECDSS can better utilize EEP-MPA participants/employees. The evaluators also determined that the majority of those who have participated in the program are/were women. We find this important because the EEP is helping the agency offer opportunities for the women of their agency to be successful.

This evaluation also found that employees (participants) truly want to make a difference in their communities. They began or continue to work at the agency because they are intrinsically motivated to work in the public sector. They applied to the EEP-MPA for several reasons, but one of those reasons was to become better workers for their clients and for the agency. Supervisors also agreed that the EEP-MPA is beneficial to the community because it provides participants with an advanced knowledge of what government does and how government works.

Although some participants indicated they were already good workers prior to enrolling in the EEP-MPA, the majority began performing better because of their affiliation with the program. Supervisors and participants agree that, as a result of their participation, these employees are now better able to work and communicate with coworkers, customers, supervisors, members of the community, and other stakeholders of the agency. This is because they are gaining the experience and competencies public administrators need to have in order to be successful and effective leaders within the agency. They understand their jobs better and why they do what they do; they

understand policies better and why they are in place; and they better understand their organization's responsibilities to the public and want to help in any way that they can. They have learned to be more analytical and critical with respect to their job duties, which leads them to be more organized and better able to prioritize what needs to get done first so as to avoid a disruption in services. They can visualize the flaws in current processes, and they constantly seek ways to make the process better for themselves, the agency, and their customers.

The skills program participants are gaining or improving upon span from having a better home/work life balance to having the ability to perform a program evaluation. EEP-MPA graduates are more informed about government issues and the administrative challenges they face on the job. They now have more in-depth knowledge of how organizational structures, politics, and shrinking budgets affect agency decision-making. These participants can also better communicate with supervisors/administrators, customers, and other stakeholders and have more confidence speaking up about their suggestions for change and improvement. Throughout their educational endeavor, they have had classroom instruction that incorporates real world problems and issues that government has faced and will continue to face in the future. These classes are taught by scholars and practitioner-professionals from the public, non-profit, and private sectors, including ECDSS staff.

Not only are graduates of the program gaining the technical, conceptual, interpersonal and business skills needed to do their jobs, but they are also becoming leaders who can guide and motivate those around them. They have worked on numerous group projects with complete strangers and have learned a combination of strategies to better manage themselves and those around them in various situations. They have presented their own ideas and have supported those of their fellow classmates. All the while, they are building networks with other

professionals in the field. Combined, these experiences have helped shape them into productive and effective leaders and collaborators. Such skills enable the organization to build lasting relationships with stakeholders and the various other agencies that work with ECDSS to deliver goods and services to the public.

It does not appear that stakeholder concerns regarding retention can be supported by the data gathered and presented. In fact, participants indicated they would not be deterred (from the program) if they were required to remain at the agency for some time upon completion.

Participants have remain employed long after (>12 years) obtaining their MPA degrees. Many have also expressed their desire to stay with the agency and utilize the skills and knowledge they have gained. Although the majority of the participants and graduates have been promoted, some have not yet had the chance to put their skills to practice on the job. They are hopeful, however, that the agency will find some way to incorporate them (and their skills) into agency projects and initiatives.

One cause for concern is that these participants feel that are not getting the opportunities to fully utilize their newly-acquired/better developed competencies. Although agency supervisors and administrators believe they are providing EEP graduates with such opportunities to use their abilities, participants of the program do not agree. Participants report they use some of their new knowledge and capabilities in their current jobs, but not all of the skillset obtained in their MPA studies is being used. We have found that they want to do more. While they wait and aspire to get promoted (via civil service examinations) to use what they have learned, many are willing to work on special projects and initiatives within the agency. They want to demonstrate to supervisors what they are capable of doing, and want to be recognized for the accomplishments and achievements they have made because of their successful completion of the degree program. They

also want to keep learning so that they do not lose any of the knowledge they have gained. Overall, however, participants of the program are grateful for the opportunity they have been afforded by the EEP and are satisfied with the way that it is administered by both ECDSS as well as SUNY Buffalo State.

Upon review of the goals of the program, as established by the qualitative data gathered, the evidence shows that the EEP-MPA is attaining **all** of the goals it has set out to achieve. Employees are becoming more professionalized, and getting the skills and education deemed imperative for public administrators for 21<sup>st</sup> century governance. They are also able to use a portion of those skills in their current jobs, and are performing better than they were when they began the program. Some of these participants are also getting promoted within the agency because of the education they have received. They are not leaving the agency once they obtain their degrees and seem to stay longer than expected, with some even attributing their agency longevity to their participation in the EEP. All in all, the evaluators find much value in the program and believe ECDSS can begin to use it more as a vehicle for change and progress in attaining organizational goals and other initiatives. In Chapter V of this program evaluation, we have set forth some recommendations for program stakeholders to assist them in more effectively gaining value for their investment in the EEP-MPA.

## Chapter V: Recommendations, Implications, and Future Research

### Recommendations

The findings of this evaluation offer ECDSS with some proactive and creative solutions to the concerns they may have regarding the value (or perceived lack thereof) the EEP-MPA adds to the agency, as well as concerns about retention and recruitment. Additionally included are recommendations for possible improvements to the program. These are as follows:

- PROFESSIONALIZATION OF ALL LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE AGENCY
  - The EEP-MPA program presents an opportunity to utilize the MPA degree program as a management training program for agency managers. It is recognized that in a civil service environment it is difficult to determine in advance who will be placed into management positions; therefore, it is recommended that ECDSS incorporate the MPA program as a management educational core to serve as a standardized, competency-based training regimen for all new administrators, managers, and select supervisors. In this way, there would be a consistent base of knowledge, skills and competencies that all levels of management will have, and as time goes on, the agency can begin requiring this MPA level of education for upper-level management positions.
  - Supervisors and administrators within the agency can also encourage other employees who may be more suitable for leadership positions to enroll in the EEP-MPA.
  - ECDSS administrators may also wish to review the course content of the MPA degree program at SUNY Buffalo State to verify that it furthers the goals of ECDSS. Administrators from the College are able and willing to work with ECDSS administrators to develop a track (set of classes) that is built around the content that ECDSS deems important for their staff. ECDSS can also take this one step further, and have administrators from the agency teach special topics courses. (With more involvement from ECDSS administration, it may also help recruit qualified individuals from outside the agency to work for ECDSS.) The 15 credit-hour Advanced (Graduate) Certificate in Public Management available through SUNY Buffalo State's Public Administration and Nonprofit Management Division might also serve as a vehicle for the County to tailor training for ECDSS staff.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> SUNY requires that all credits earned toward a graduate certificate must be applicable to a graduate degree program. All 15 hours completed in the Advanced Certificate are seamlessly applied to the MPA program.



- RECOGNITION OF EEP-MPA GRADUATES, PROGRAM VALUE, AND PROGRAM POTENTIAL
  - There is a need to provide ECDSS administrators with information regarding graduate experiences with the program and to potentially use this information to formally recognize graduates. We propose that these accomplishments be celebrated and/or advertised within the agency. The "Erie County Blast" may be one way to express such recognition of achievement to those individuals who graduate from the program. We believe that this celebration of earning the MPA will help participants feel that the ECDSS supports/appreciates their academic and personal achievements. We also believe that non-participants may feel more inclined to participate in the program as well, as some may not be aware of the program's existence. This recognition can also be used to strengthen these employees' affective commitment to the organization. We also propose that these new academic records be added to the employees' personnel file, along with transcript information from the college so when these employees begin seeking promotions, the agency will have this information readily available.
  - These recognition events could also be the first step by which graduates could be identified to assist in county initiatives and apply newly-acquired skills to agency matters. While all respondents believe the EEP-MPA is a great opportunity for employees, a small number of participants believe that ECDSS administrators and supervisors are unaware of the skillset graduates have obtained. Even fewer believe their supervisors utilize these skills for departmental goals. Program graduates are interested in becoming more involved with County initiatives, work redesigns, and special projects. ECDSS should develop a process that would enable graduates to apply their learned skills to projects within the agency so as to help them gain in-house experience for management and leadership positions. Not only would including EEP-MPA graduates prepare participants for promotional opportunities, capitalizing on the skills of EEP-MPA graduates should save the County funds currently expended for external consultants.
  
- THE EEP AS A SUCCESSION PLANNING/KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TOOL
  - Given the demographic changes ECDSS faces in the coming years, we propose that the EEP-MPA be used as a tool for agency succession planning and knowledge management. It is important to have an inventory of employee skills and competencies. As employees leave, get promoted, transfer, or retire, their positions will need to be filled as quickly as possible so as to avoid a disruption of services. These positions should be filled with only those who are competent and capable of performing the required job duties. The agency should first look to its internal supply of employees whenever possible to fill these positions as a cost-saving/cost-benefit measure. Therefore, there is a need to maintain records of what skills, competencies, and experience are required for the numerous jobs within the ECDSS and use them to compare to those skills, competencies, and experience that current

employees already have. Maintaining such records would allow HRD and Personnel to better manage employee knowledge and conveniently fill vacant positions with employees who are just as (or more than) competent as their predecessors. Employees who graduated from the EEP-MPA should be added to these lists.

- ECDSS administrators may consider adding the EEP-MPA to its future Strategic Plan with regard to its employee training and development.

- CONTINUED LEARNING FOR PARTICIPANTS

- New methods could include a process by which graduates and agency administrators meet with current EEP-MPA participants to assist them with their Capstone Projects (690), agency initiatives, or other issues in an effort to support current program participants. It would also provide an active role for graduates to continue communicating and learning, which was an item of interest for many of the study participants. Erie County could also collaborate with SUNY Buffalo State one step further by providing assistance and project ideas to all (interested) MPA students, not just those employed in the agency. This could have multiple benefits for the County, including possible recruitment of workers from other sectors and prolonged employment with the department.
- EEP administrators may want to consider having participants become active members of the Buffalo-Niagara chapter of American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), which sometimes meets during business hours. Such involvement would provide participants with on-going learning and networking with other public administrators.
- A mentorship program is also suggested whereby agency administrators can mentor and guide new MPA graduates to familiarize them with more career options within the agency. This mentorship program can aid employees in finding their niche within ECDSS and provide them with more experience in performing specific job duties. This experience would smooth employee transition into open positions more easily and with more knowledge and experiences of job expectations. It may also discourage agency attrition by providing opportunities for participants to achieve personal/professional goals.

- CONTINUOUS REVIEW OF EEP PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS, PROGRESS, AND IMPROVEMENT MEASURES

- ECDSS should continue to review the EEP participation requirements. As indicated by the survey, almost all of the participant respondents would still have applied to the program if they were required to remain employed for a certain amount of time after receiving their degree. If there are retention concerns within the department regarding this issue, it appears requiring a period of time to remain with the department would not deter applicants.

- The department should also review the possibility of having some courses for this program held at a downtown location in an effort to make access easier for staff to attend, especially if the department begins to consider the option of having supervisors and administrators within the agency enroll in the MPA (or Graduate Certificate) programs. Because many participants noted they enjoyed the SUNY Buffalo State campus because of their ability to network with others from outside of the agency, this innovation would need to be considered carefully.
- It is recommended that the department develop methods to capture more qualitative and quantitative data regarding the EEP-MPA. As discovered in this review, program participants have not had an opportunity to provide both ECDSS and SUNY Buffalo State with valuable or current feedback on their experiences with the program. It would be incumbent on both to collaborate over process and content of future timely participant surveys to evaluate the program.
  - We suggest performing entrance and exit interviews with each participant of the program. Entrance interviews would be used to collect any information deemed important by EEP administrators. It could also be used to gather important demographic information, including race, age, and gender to further track program participation statistics. Exit interviews should be done following program completion for each participant as well. The data gathered from entrance and exit interviews would provide stakeholders with more insight about participant experiences with the program, and allow for easier and continual program evaluation. Information gathered could be used to administer the program more efficiently and effectively, and find ways to improve the program as a whole.
  - We also recommend more, ongoing one-on-one support between participants and administrators from both ECDSS and SUNY Buffalo State to ensure participants are on track with degree requirements and capstone progress.

## Implications

The ECDSS implements and administers various programs and services to the residents of Erie County, New York. The majority of ECDSS visitors only come because they are in need of some type of service(s). Many of the programs and services are income-based, and are only available to the neediest members of our communities. The decisions made by the employees of the agency directly affect many individuals during some of the most difficult circumstances in their lives. Therefore, it is essential that employees have the knowledge, skills, and most importantly, the

educational resources, to serve Erie County residents. In order to fulfill its mission and vision, ECDSS has a responsibility to provide employees with highly-skilled, highly-experienced, and highly-competent leaders that can provide direction to staff as they make decisions.

According to the Erie County Department of Social Services 2017-2020 Strategic Plan (2017), ECDSS prides itself on its core ideologies of integrity, respect, quality customer service, collaboration, and diversity. The agency strives to provide client-focused services by utilizing the most innovative, productive, and efficient methods, based on research and best practices, and in collaboration with others from inside and outside of the agency. ECDSS aims to provide these services by maintaining a culture in which employees feel more connected to the agency's mission, as well as by providing an environment of learning and a commitment to service. This strategic plan also highlights the importance of workforce development by implementing and maintaining a succession plan, redesigning the training department, and stabilizing the workforce. To begin to effectively implement this strategic plan, administration must accurately identify which employees possess critical skills and which employees may be potential candidates to fill vacant positions when needed. In doing so ECDSS will be able to both recognize and develop the employees within their organization. They may discover that their "bench" is quite deep and that by utilizing the EEP to track, monitor and develop their current employees they will be able focus on the development of specific skills and the enhanced utilization of their workforce.

An effective leader needs to be educated and knowledgeable about the various environments in which they work and with which they interact. ECDSS administrators must be able to consider the (internal and external) financial, organizational, social, and political realms of their agency and how these factors affect how they "do business". The EEP-MPA program has

proven its effectiveness in providing employees and students with valuable, professional skills that are required of a public administrator in the agency.

Finally, it should be emphasized that this program evaluation does not propose that supervisors or administrators give EEP-MPA program participants and graduates more opportunities to succeed while limiting the chances of those employees who do not participate in the program. An opportunity to mitigate any perception of favoritism could be for ECDSS to develop an objective process by which to select employees to participate in the EEP-MPA program.

It is important to recognize that the needs of many government agencies now require a highly-educated workforce as challenges have arisen because of technological advancements, globalization, and increased governance. Public administrators need to have the opportunity to continue to professionally develop new and advanced skills in order to keep up with the ever-changing dynamics, structures, and priorities of government. While the responsibilities of government have continued to expand, the education levels and professional skills of their personnel have not. In anticipation of an increased demand for a higher-skilled workforce, it is recommended that ECDSS reevaluate the current job requirements and skills needed to identify staff for promotional opportunities. The EEP-MPA could be a more integral part of ECDSS' ability to recruit first-rate talent to ECDSS (who can apply for the EEP-MPA after being employed one year in ECDSS), to develop current employees' skills, and to enhance the agency's ability to serve its customers.

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## APPENDIX A Retiree Survey Coversheet and Survey Questionnaire



County of Erie  
Mark Poloncarz  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

3/15/17

Dear MS-HSA or MPA graduate:

My name is Caroline Alagna and I am a Senior Social Welfare Examiner in the Medicaid/Long Term Care Unit at Erie County Department of Social Services (ECDSS). I am also a graduate student at Buffalo State College sponsored by the department's Employee Education Program (EEP). This is the same program in which you were sponsored and participated when you were an employee.

For my final Capstone project, I am evaluating the impact of Buffalo State College's MS-HSA/MPA Employee Education Program that has been sponsored by ECDSS since 1982. This evaluation is being sponsored by Buffalo State College and is supported by the EEP. I am requesting your assistance in gathering information about the program by inviting you to partake in this research by completing the attached survey.

The enclosed questionnaire will require approximately twenty (20) minutes to complete. Please note that you do not have to include any personal information, but if you choose to do so, all personal information provided will be kept confidential. All questions are optional, but I encourage you to answer with as much detailed information as you feel necessary. The more information I have, the clearer will be my conclusion.

The data collected will allow me to assess the benefits of the program and its impact in the workplace. It is my belief that providing useful information to the stakeholders of the program about the benefits of the EEP and the MS-HSA/MPA degree, the department will be able to enhance the current model and also continue providing this opportunity to employees of ECDSS.

If you choose to participate in this project, please return your questionnaire to me by April 14, 2017 using the return envelope provided. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at either the following email address or my direct number:

Alagcm52@mail.buffalostate.edu

(716)858-1909 (direct work phone number)

**Employee Education Program-Retiree Survey**

Job grade when began ECDSS employment\_\_\_\_\_

Job grade when left ECDSS employment\_\_\_\_\_

1. The opportunity to enroll in this program influenced my decision to obtain employment with ECDSS.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

2. I enrolled in this program anticipating that the knowledge I acquired would enhance my job performance.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

3. I enrolled in this program anticipating it would assist me with advancement at ECDSS.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

4. My acceptance into this program was a factor in continuing employment with ECDSS.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

5. I considered leaving ECDSS after I completed the MS-HSA/MPA program.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

6. The skills I learned in the MS-HSA/MPA program helped me to improve my job performance.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

7. The skills I learned in the MS-HSA/MPA program assisted me in my community activities.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

8. I believe that ECDSS Supervision and Administration were aware of the skills I obtained through the MS-HSA/MPA program.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

9. I was provided the opportunities to apply the MS-HSA/MPA skills in my positions at ECDSS.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

10. As a result of completing this degree, I had more promotional opportunities.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

11. As a result of completing this degree, I believe my suggestions at ECDSS were better articulated.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

12. As a result of completing the MS-HSA/MPA program, I was better able to serve my customers.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

13. As a result of completing the MS-HSA/MPA degree, I had a better understanding of the ECDSS mission and objectives.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

14. As a result of completing the MS-HSA/MPA degree, I had more confidence interacting with supervisors and administrators.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree

- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

15. My suggestions for change were better conveyed to ECDSS Administration after completing the MS-HSA/MPA degree.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

16. Overall, my professional life has benefited from the skills and knowledge I acquired through the MS-HSA/MPA program.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

17. I would have found it more beneficial to attend classes at a downtown location (43 Court St) rather than the Buffalo State Campus.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

18. I would like to have had an opportunity to take additional training classes and communicate with other MS-HSA/MPA participants.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

Do you have any other comments not addressed in this survey regarding the MS-HSA/MPA program? Please explain below:

May we contact you for a follow-up interview? Please check one:

☐ Yes

☐ No

Best way to contact you \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B Participant Interview Cover letter and Interview Questions



County of Erie  
Mark Poloncarz  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

4/10/17

Dear Fellow Students and Graduates:

My name is Caroline Alagna and I am a Senior Social Welfare Examiner in the Medicaid/Long Term Care Unit at Erie County Department of Social Services (ECDSS). I am a graduate student at Buffalo State College sponsored by the department's Employee Education Program (EEP).

For my final Capstone project, I am partnering with Frank DeCarlo, retired Assistant Commissioner, to evaluate the impact of Buffalo State College's MS-HSA/MPA Employee Education Program that has been sponsored by ECDSS since 1982. This evaluation is being sponsored by Buffalo State College and is supported by the EEP. I am requesting your assistance in gathering information about the program by inviting you to partake in this research. The information will be gathered from interviews with each of you. Each interview is expected to take approximately thirty (30) minutes.

We would like to begin the interviews on April 19, 2017 however this date is flexible in order to accommodate your busy schedules. We are offering both face-to-face interviews as well as telephone interviews depending on your preference. Face-to-face interviews will take place at 43 Court St in the Human Resource Department (HRD), room 302. To participate in this study, please respond via email by April 17, 2017. In your email, please indicate whether you would prefer a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview and what time of day works best to suits your needs. Once we have received these responses, we will contact you with a date and time to secure our meeting.

The data collected will allow me to assess the benefits of the program and its impact in the workplace. It is my belief that providing useful information to the stakeholders of the program about the benefits of the EEP and the MS-HSA/MPA degree, the department will be able to enhance the current model and also continue providing this opportunity to employees of ECDSS.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at either the following email address or my direct number: Alagcm52@mail.buffalostate.edu\_or (716)858-1909 (direct work phone number)

On behalf of SUNY Buffalo State College, the Erie County Department of Social Services, and myself I would like to thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors.

Caroline Alagna

95 Franklin St, Rm. 385

Buffalo, NY 14202

## **Participant Interview Questions**

### **1) PARTICIPANTS' INFORMATION:**

**a) NAME:**

**b) SEX: FEMALE / MALE**

**c) AGE:**

**d) CURRENT JOB TITLE/GRADE:**

**e) JOB TITLE WHEN BEGAN PROGRAM IF DIFFERENT**

**f) DATE STARTED PROGRAM:**

**g) DATE COMPLETED PROGRAM or EXPECTED DATE OF COMPLETION:**

## **INTERVIEW**

### **SECTION I**

1) When did you begin working for ECDSS?

1a) What motivated you to begin working for ECDSS?

1b) What was your level of education when you began?

2) What was your position with ECDSS when you started?

Job Grade?

Was this a supervisory position?



What were the job requirements for that job?

3) How did you find out about the Employee Education Program (EEP), and had you worked for Erie County in another department prior to starting in ECDSS?

4) What motivated you to apply for admittance into the program?

4a) If program standards changed, and the program began requiring that you remain working for ECDSS for a pre-determined specified amount of time after obtaining your degree, would you still have applied for admittance to the program? How would you perceive this standard, and do you consider it a reasonable expectation?

5) What were your expectations both personally and professionally before you began the program?

5a) After you completed the program had these expectations been met? If you have not yet completed the program, what do you expect after completion?

6) What type of skills do you believe you developed through your participation in the program?

7) During your participation in the program, and after completion of the program, were you able to apply the skills you learned on the job? Do you have any recommendations for how you can apply these skills?

7a) Were you able to apply these skills in any other capacity in your personal life?

8) Do you believe your job performance at ECDSS has improved due to your participation and in what way(s)?

9) After completing the MS-HSA/MPA program, have you or would you consider leaving your employment at ECDSS? Why or why not, and under what circumstances would you consider leaving? Has participation in the program influenced you to stay at ECDSS and how?

10) Were you ever involved with special projects, initiatives, or work process redesigns while enrolled or after you completed the program? How did you find out about these projects? If you have not had an opportunity, would you be interested in getting more involved with such initiatives?

10a) If you have participated, what were you involved in and what were the outcomes?

10b) Can you provide details, such as final reports, for any of these initiatives?

## **SECTION II**

11) In retrospect, what difference has the program made in your work with ECDSS?

12) How many advanced positions have you held since completing the program, or since beginning the program? Do you believe that your degree has helped you obtain these positions? Do you feel that the county can do more to highlight the skills that you have gained through participation, and how?

13) Through participation in the program, which professional skills were developed that are essential to your job and how have you applied those skills?

14) What courses in the MS-HSA/MPA program did you find most beneficial? (See list)

15) What type of training would you have liked to have available that isn't/wasn't part of your MS-HSA/MPA program?

16) Would you have preferred to attend classes at a downtown location (43 Court) rather than at the Buffalo State Campus/Canisius Campus?

17) What type of class room activities would you liked to have more of in the MS-HSA/MPA program? How would this add value to the courses?

18) Now that you have completed the program (or continue to work on your degree) how would you prefer to continue learning and communicating with fellow MS-HSA/MPA program participants?

19) What suggestions do you have regarding the administration of the program?

## **APPENDIX C Participant Survey Coversheet and Web-Administered Survey**

3/9/17

Dear Participant:

My name is Caroline Alagna and I am a graduate student at Buffalo State College. For my final project, I am examining the benefits of the Employee Education Program that is sponsored by Erie County Department of Social Services. I am currently sponsored by the program and because you have also participated in the Employee Education Program, I am inviting you to partake in this research study by completing the attached surveys. All information provided will be kept confidential.

The following questionnaire will require approximately twenty (20) minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time. Please remember that you do not have to include any personal information if you do not feel comfortable. All questions are optional, but I encourage you to answer each one truthfully and to provide as much detailed information as you feel necessary.

If you choose to participate in this project, please return your questionnaire to me via the contact information provided below by 4/30/17. If you need more time to complete this survey, please contact me so that I can ensure that your responses are included in the study results. Completion and return of the questionnaire will indicate your willingness to participate in this study. If you require additional information or have questions, again please feel free contact me.

I would like to personally thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. The data collected will allow me to provide useful information to the stakeholders of the program about the benefits that the program has provided to you, to me, and with the highest hopes, to those who wish to participate in the future.

Sincerely,

Caroline Alagna

95 Franklin St Rm. 385

Buffalo, NY 14202

(716)858-1909 (direct work phone number)

Alagcm52@mail.buffalostate.edu or [Alagnac@erie.gov](mailto:Alagnac@erie.gov)

**Employee Education Program-Participant Survey**

Please rate the following statements based on the answer that most closely relates to how you feel.

1. I began/continue working for ECDSS because I want to help serve my community in a meaningful way.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

2. Participation in the EEP has influenced my decision to remain working for ECDSS.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

3. I participated/am participating in the Employee Education Program so that I can be a better worker within the agency.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

4. I participated/am participating in the Employee Education Program so that I can advance in my career at ECDSS.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

5. If EEP standards changed, and the program began requiring that you remain working for ECDSS for a specified amount of time after receiving your degree, would you still have applied for admittance into the program?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

6. As a result of this degree, I believe that I have/will have more promotional opportunities within the Agency.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

7. Completion of the MS-HSA/MPA degree program through Buffalo State College has provided me with the necessary skills needed in order to lead and manage others towards the goals of the agency.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

8. I am able to apply the skills gained through the MS-HSA/MPA program in my personal life.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

9. I am able to apply the skills that I have gained through the MS-HSA/MPA degree program in my current job within the agency.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

10. I would like a position in the agency where I can utilize the skills that I have learned through participation in the EEP.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

11. My job performance at ECDSS has improved because my participation in the EEP.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

12. I am better able to work with others (co-workers, supervision, customers, members of the community, stakeholders) because of my participation in the EEP.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

13. ECDSS Supervision and Administration are aware of the skills that I have gained through my participation in the EEP.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

14. My supervisor utilizes the skills, knowledge, and experience I have gained through the EEP for department initiatives.

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

15. The County provides me with opportunities to utilize the skills I have gained through my participation in the EEP.

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

16. I am interested in becoming more involved in County/department initiatives, special projects, and work redesigns.

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

17. I am satisfied with the position I currently have at ECDSS AND the degree that I have earned through the Employee Education Program.

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree



18. I would consider outside employment for a position that utilizes the skills I have gained through my participation in the EEP.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

19. I am satisfied with the way the EEP is administered by both County and Buffalo State College Administrations.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

20. I would like to continue learning and communicating with fellow MS-HSA/MPA program participants and graduates.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

21. I would have preferred classes in a downtown location (for example, 43 Court St). \*\*This would only include students from ECDSS.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

22. The skills I gained through my participation in the MS-HSA/MPA degree program include:  
(Please choose all that apply)

- ☐ Critical thinking skills

- o Professional communication skills (verbal and written)
- o Better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("Big Picture View")
- o Time management skills
- o Leadership/management skills
- o Public budgeting skills
- o Research skills
- o Organizational/Prioritization skills

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments or suggestions regarding the EEP: (Improvements, favorite classes/classroom activities, additional training suggestions, etc.)

## **APPENDIX D Supervisor Survey Coversheet and Web-Administered Survey**

Good Afternoon,

My name is Caroline Alagna and I am a Senior Social Welfare Examiner in the Medicaid/Long Term Care Unit at Erie County Department of Social Services (ECDSS). I am also a graduate student at Buffalo State College sponsored by the ECDSS Employee Education Program (EEP). For my final Capstone Project, I am partnering with Frank DeCarlo, retired Assistant Commissioner-Public Health Insurance, to evaluate the impact of the Buffalo State MS-HSA/MPA Employee Education Program. This evaluation is being sponsored by Buffalo State and is supported by the EEP. We value your opinion and are asking that you please participate in this study by completing the attached survey.

The survey focuses on your perceptions, as a supervisor within ECDSS, with regard to the EEP and the MPA degree program. The information that you provide will allow me to assess the benefits of the program and its impact in the workplace. It is my belief that providing useful information to the stakeholders of the program about the benefits of the EEP and the MS-HSA/MPA degree, the department will be able to enhance the current model and also continue providing this opportunity to employees of ECDSS.

The survey is expected to take less than fifteen (15) minutes. To participate, please click the blue link below, titled "FILL OUT FORM". If possible, please respond by Friday, June 9, 2017.

On behalf of SUNY Buffalo State College, the Erie County Department of Social Services, and myself I would like to thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors.

Caroline Alagna

--

Caroline Alagna | Senior Social Welfare Examiner  
Erie County | Department of Social Services  
95 Franklin St., Room 385 | Buffalo, NY 14202  
P:+1(716)858-1909 | F:+1(716)858-1937  
Caroline.Alagna@erie.gov | <http://www.erie.gov>  
[Alagcm52@mail.buffalostate.edu](mailto:Alagcm52@mail.buffalostate.edu)

### Employee Education Program-Supervisor Survey

ECDSS offers eligible employees a chance to pursue a number of academic degrees through the Employee Education Program (EEP). One such degree is the MPA (Master of Public Administration), formally called the MS-HSA (Master of Science in Human Services Administration) degree. Buffalo State's Master of Public Administration in Public and Nonprofit Management (MPA) program provides an advanced course of study concentrating on the conceptual, technical, and professional skills required for administrative and leadership positions in the public and nonprofit sectors. ECDSS employees that wish to participate in the (EEP's) MPA program must be employed with ECDSS for at least three years and also have supervisor approval prior to an application for admittance. This survey focuses on your perceptions (as a supervisor) of the MS-HSA/MPA degree program and its effects on the agency, its employees, and the community as a whole. Please rate the following statements based on the answer that most closely relates to your perception of the MPA program and the EEP.

Job Grade\_\_\_\_\_

1. I believe that the Employee Education Program is a valuable program to ECDSS and its employees.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

2. I believe that the Employee Education Program benefits the community because it provides employees with an advanced education in public administration and public policy.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

3. I believe that the MS-HSA/MPA degree program, sponsored by the ECDSS Employee Education Program, helps provide employees with the skills they will use at ECDSS.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

4. I have directly or indirectly supervised a participant of the MS-HSA/MPA program.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unknown

5. I am aware of the skills that employees gain through their participation in the MS-HSA/MPA program.

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

6. Employees that have participated in the MS-HSA/MPA are able to apply their skills, knowledge, and experience in their current job.

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

7. I (would) recommend employees that have participated in the MS-HSA/MPA program for department/county initiatives, work redesigns, and special projects.

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

8. Participants/graduates of the MS-HSA/MPA program are better able to work with others (co-workers, supervisors, customers/representatives, members of the community, stakeholders) because of their participation in the program.

☐ Strongly Disagree

- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

9. The MS-HSA/MPA degree program, sponsored by the Employee Education Program, has improved the performance of participants that I supervise.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

10. When I interview applicants, I take into consideration whether or not they have a degree.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

11. An MS-HSA/MPA degree stands out when I am interviewing applicants interested in joining my department.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

12. I would NOT recommend the MPA program to all employees in my department.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

13. If a supervisory/administrative position opened in my department, I would recommend one of my employees that graduated with an MS-HSA/MPA degree.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

14. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee with an understanding of how government agencies must adapt to various internal and external environments.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

15. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee with organizational, prioritization, and time management skills.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

16. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee with well-developed and professional communication skills (written and verbal).

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

17. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that has participated in leadership/management training courses or classes.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

18. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that is able to effectively communicate with others (co-workers, subordinates, supervisors, customers/representatives, stakeholders).

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

19. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that has taken public budgeting courses.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

20. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that can effectively research and interpret data.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

21. I would prefer to hire an applicant that already works within the agency and is familiar with its culture, programs/services, and computer systems.



- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

22. I believe that employees that choose to participate in the EEP are dedicated to working at ECDSS.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

23. I am satisfied with the way that the EEP/MPA program is administered by the County.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

24. Please list any skills (or other requirements) that you deem important for supervisors/administrators to have for work here at ECDSS.

## APPENDIX E EEP Stakeholder Interview

### EEP-Focused Discussion

Participants:

Title:

Caroline Alagna	Evaluation Team Member
Frank DeCarlo	Evaluation Team Member
Pat Shea	Staff Development Coordinator (ECDSS);EEP Liaison
Dr. Laurie Buonanno	Dept. of Political Science, Division of Public Administration and Nonprofit Management; Division Director (2013-May, 2017); Program Chair (2006-2012)

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#### Discussion Agenda:

- What are the goals of the program?
- What skills do you want the program to impart on employees/students?
- How are the goals being met?
- Any challenges?
- Improvements?

#### Goals:

Erie County-

Buffalo State-

#### Skills:

Erie County-

Buffalo State-

How do we know if goals are being met?

What would be considered a success?

Are there any obstacles in the way of attaining these goals?

Erie County-

Buffalo State-

Any way to overcome obstacles?

What is currently being done to evaluate the program?

Erie County-

Buffalo State-

How are participants chosen for the program?

Erie County-

Buffalo State-

How are supervisors involved in the process? How could they be more involved?

What makes the EEP unique? How does it differ from other leadership training initiatives in the department? Positives/Negatives?

What improvements could be made?

Erie County-

Buffalo State-

## **APPENDIX F Key Participant Interview**

Sharon Rochelle:

Pre-EEP Job Title and Grade: Second Deputy Commissioner-Social Services

Post EEP Job Title and Grade: First Deputy Commissioner-Social Services

Began Program:

Graduated:

---

Why did you decide to apply to EEP?

Do you feel the program is valuable to ECDSS? Why?

What skills did you walk away with?

What are some key skills you use on the job?

Job Duties:

Do you feel education is important for public sector employees and public administrators? Why?

## **APPENDIX G Key Stakeholder Interview**

Evaluation Team:

Frank DeCarlo

Caroline Alagna

Key Stakeholder:

Mary Ellen Brockmyre- Second Deputy Commissioner-Social Services

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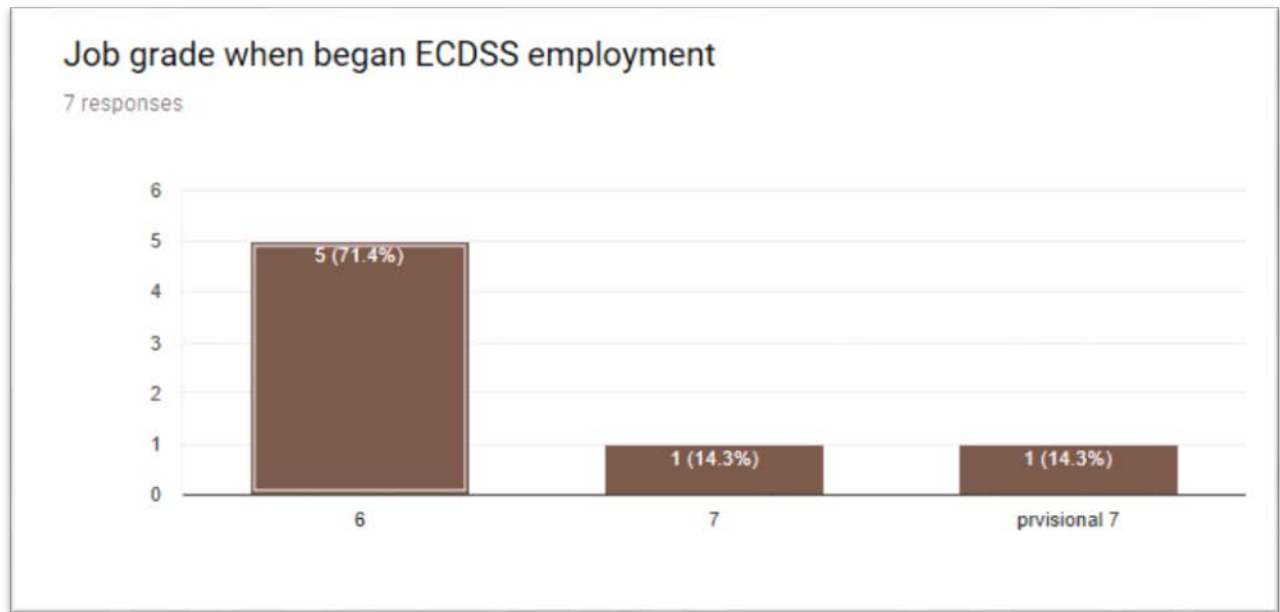
What are the goals of the program?

Do you believe the goals of the program are being met?

Do you have any concerns regarding the EEP?

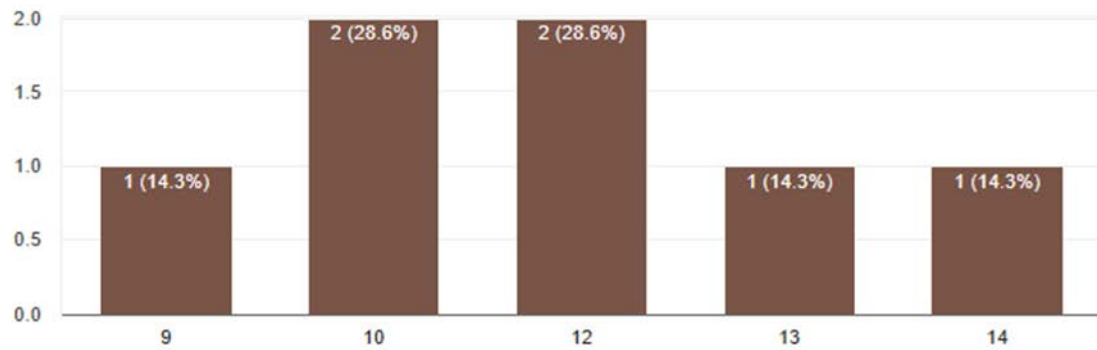
How do you feel these concerns can be addressed?

## APPENDIX H Results of the Retiree Survey



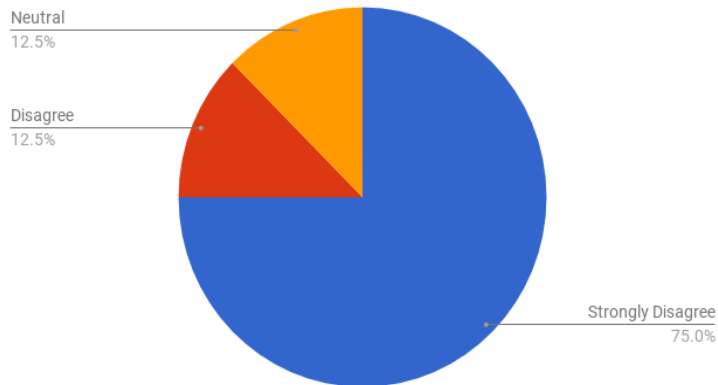
### Job grade when left ECDSS employment

7 responses



## Question 1-

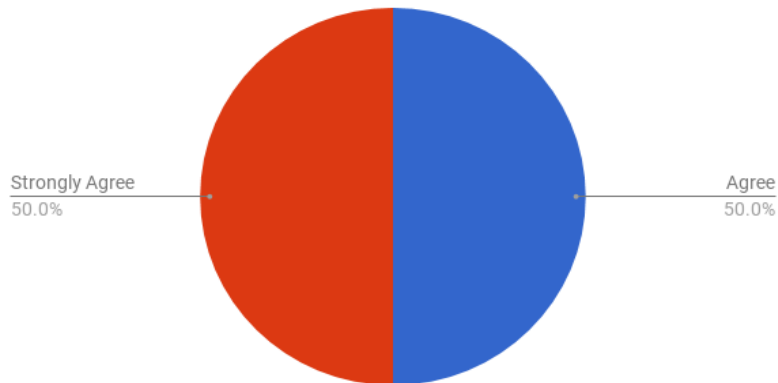
The opportunity to enroll in this program influenced my decision to obtain employment with ECDSS.



Column1
1. The opportunity to enroll in this program influenced my decision to obtain employment with ECDSS.
Strongly Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Strongly Disagree
Strongly Disagree

## Question 2-

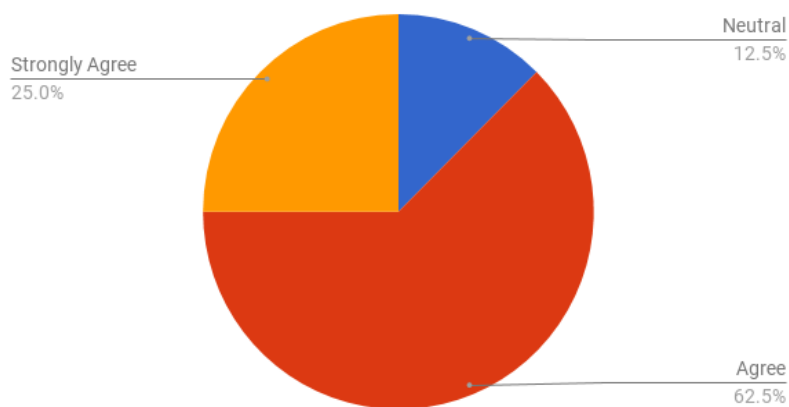
I enrolled in this program anticipating that the knowledge I acquired would enhance my job performance.



Column1	
2. I enrolled in this program anticipating that the knowledge I acquired would enhance my job performance.	
Agree	
Agree	
Agree	
Strongly Agree	
Strongly Agree	
Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Strongly Agree	

### Question 3-

I enrolled in this program anticipating it would assist me with advancement at ECDSS.

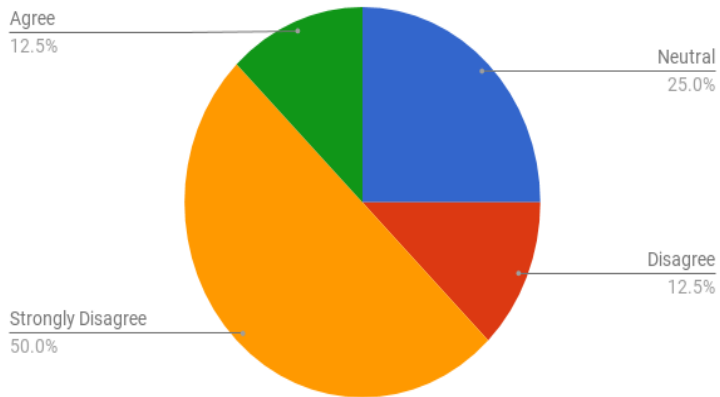




Column1
3. I enrolled in this program anticipating it would assist me with advancement at ECDSS.
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree

Question 4-

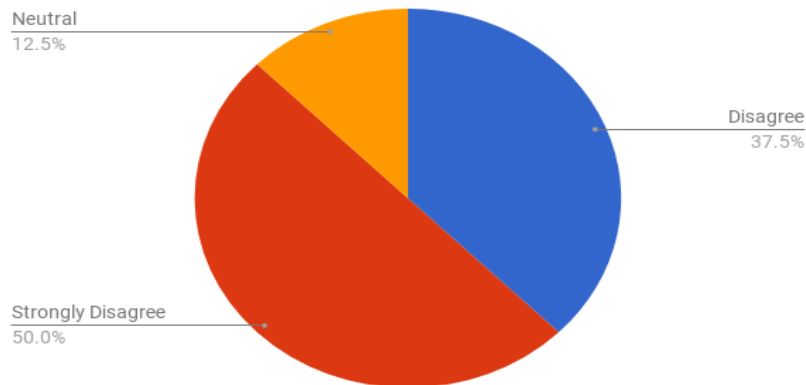
My acceptance into this program was a factor in continuing employment with ECDSS.



Column1
4. My acceptance into this program was a factor in continuing employment with ECDSS.
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Neutral
Strongly Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Agree

Question 5-

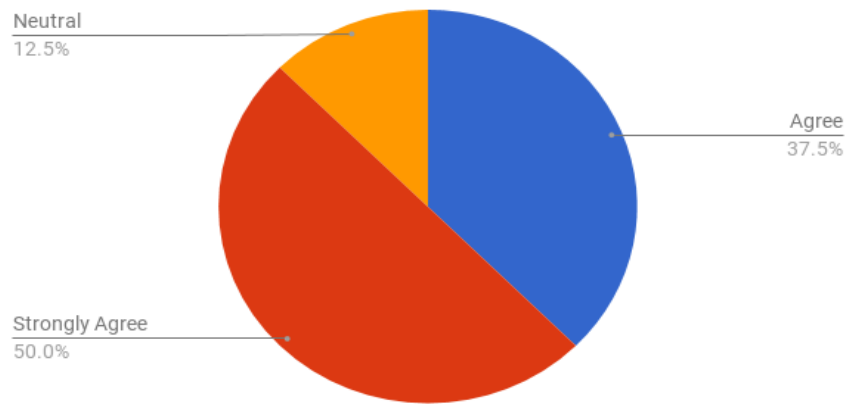
I considered leaving ECDSS after I completed the MS-HSA/MPA program.



Column1
5. I considered leaving ECDSS after I completed the MS-HSA/MPA program.
Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Neutral
Strongly Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Disagree

Question 6-

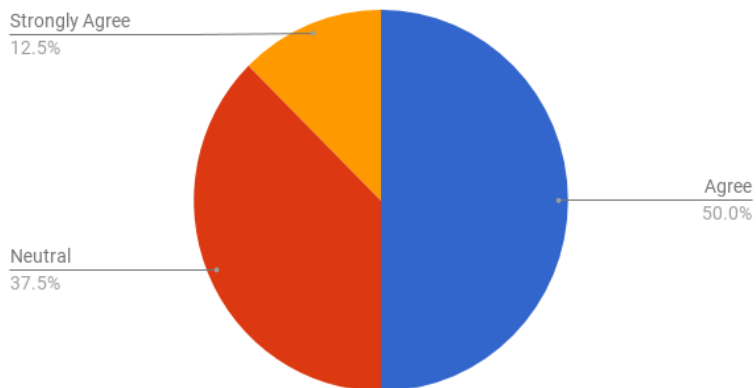
The skills I learned in the MS-HSA/MPA program helped me to improve my job performance.



Column1
6. The skills I learned in the MS-HSA/MPA program helped me to improve my job performance.
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree

### Question 7-

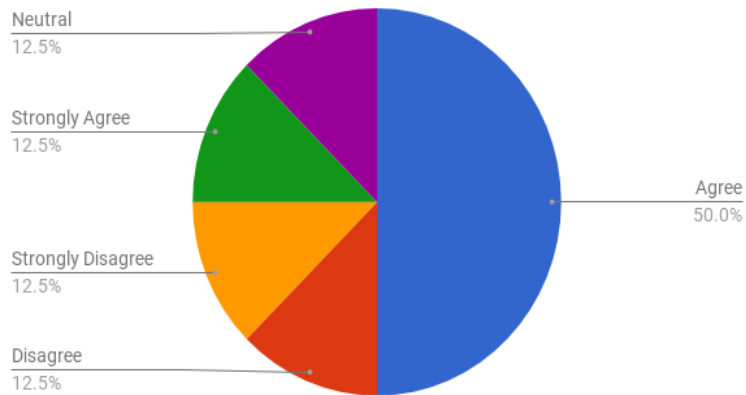
The skills I learned in the MS-HSA/MPA program assisted me in my community activities.



Column1
7. The skills I learned in the MS-HSA/MPA program assisted me in my community activities.
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Agree

## Question 8-

I believe that ECDSS Supervision and Administration were aware of the skills I obtained through the MS-HSA/MPA program.

**Column1**

8. I believe that ECDSS Supervision and Administration were aware of the skills I obtained through the MS-HSA/MPA program.

Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Agree

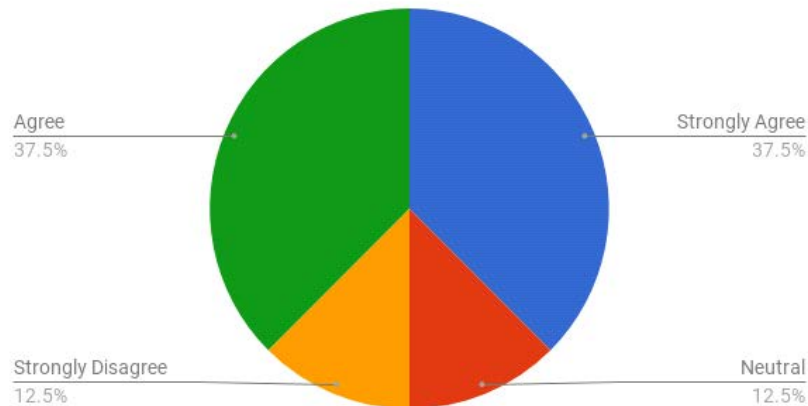
Strongly Agree

Neutral

Agree

## Question 9-

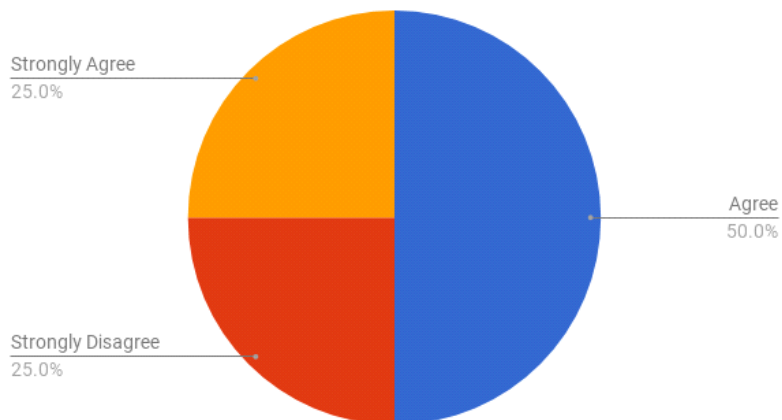
I was provided the opportunities to apply the MS-HSA/MPA skills in my positions at ECDSS.



Column1
9. I was provided the opportunities to apply the MS-HSA/MPA skills in my positions at ECDSS.
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree

### Question 10-

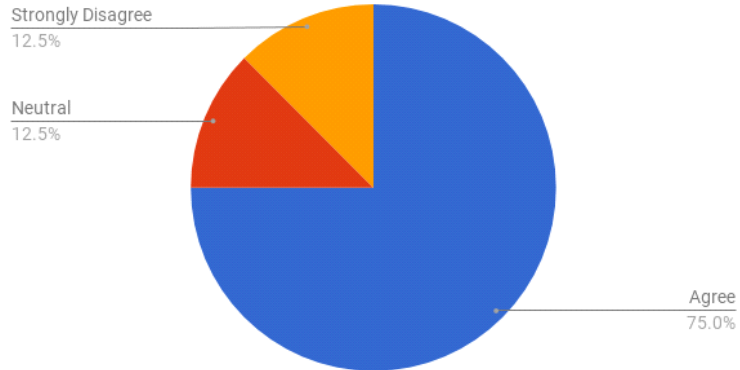
As a result of completing this degree, I had more promotional opportunities.



Column1
10. As a result of completing this degree, I had more promotional opportunities.
Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree
Strongly Agree

### Question 11-

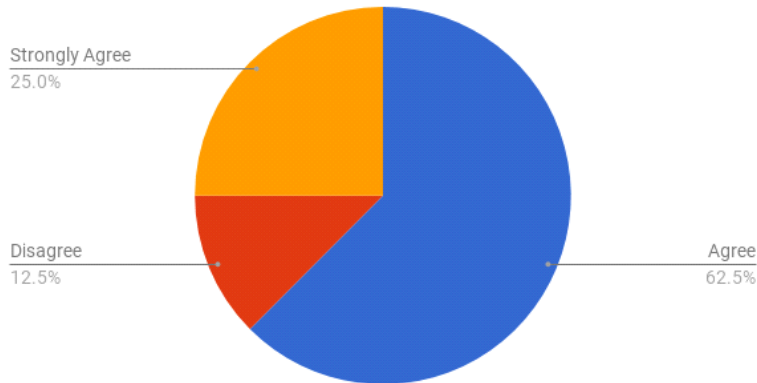
As a result of completing this degree, I believe my suggestions at ECDSS were better articulated.



Column1
11. As a result of completing this degree, I believe my suggestions at ECDSS were better articulated.
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Strongly Disagree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree

### Question 12-

As a result of completing the MS-HSA/MPA program, I was better able to serve my customers.



#### Column1

12. As a result of completing the MS-HSA/MPA program, I was better able to serve my customers.

Agree

Agree

Agree

Disagree

Agree

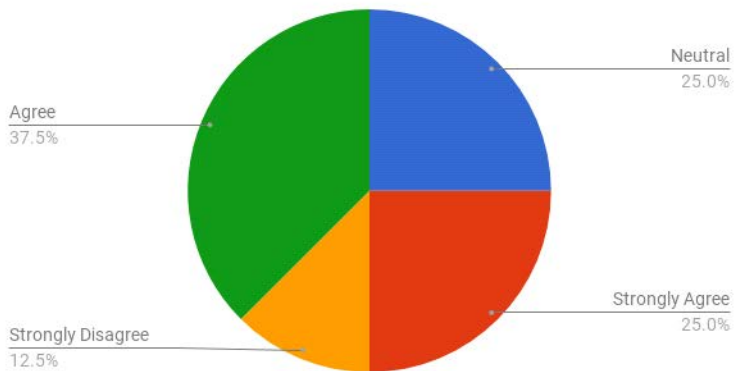
Strongly Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

#### Question 13-

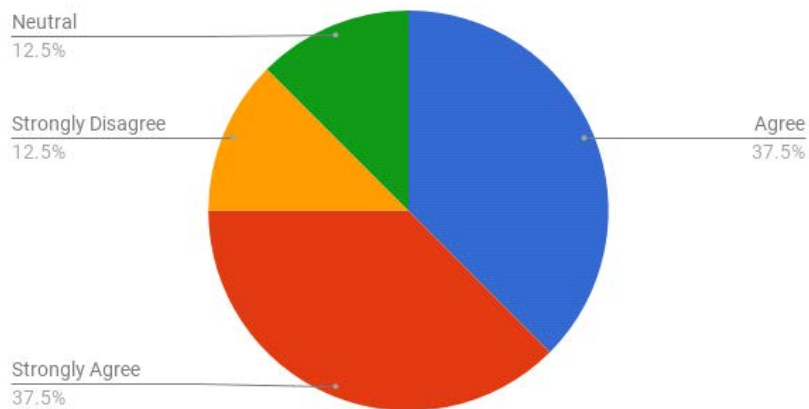
As a result of completing the MS-HSA/MPA degree, I had a better understanding of the ECDSS mission and objectives.



Column1
13. As a result of completing the MS-HSA/MPA degree, I had a better understanding of the ECDSS mission and objectives.
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Strongly Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree

#### Question 14-

As a result of completing the MS-HSA/MPA degree, I had more confidence interacting with supervisors and administrators.

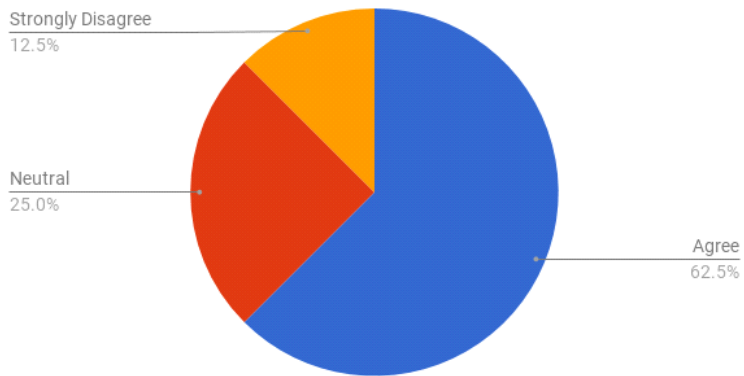


Column1
14. As a result of completing the MS-HSA/MPA degree, I had more confidence interacting with supervisors and administrators.
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Agree



## Question 15-

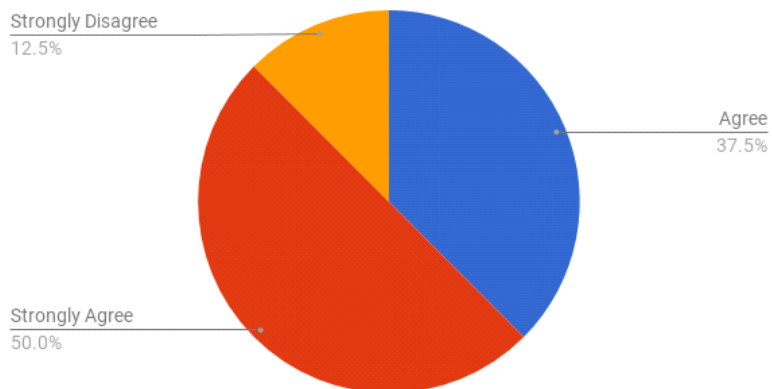
My suggestions for change were better conveyed to ECDSS Administration after completing the MS-HSA/MPA degree.



Column1
15. My suggestions for change were better conveyed to ECDSS Administration after completing the MS-HSA/MPA degree.
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Strongly Disagree
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Agree

## Question 16-

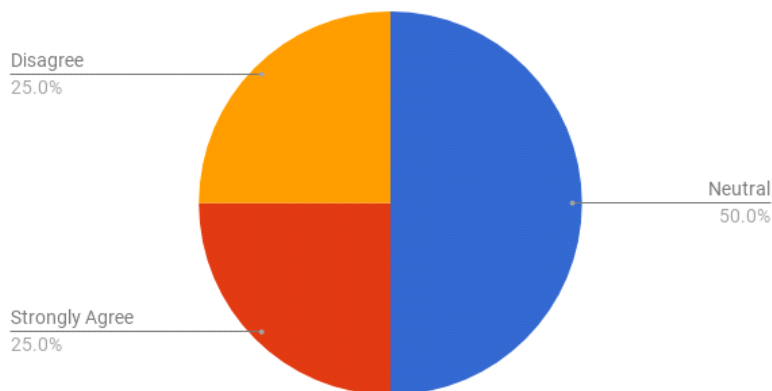
Overall, my professional life has benefited from the skills and knowledge I acquired through the MS-HSA/MPA program.



Column1
16. Overall, my professional life has benefited from the skills and knowledge I acquired through the MS-HSA/MPA program.
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree

### Question 17-

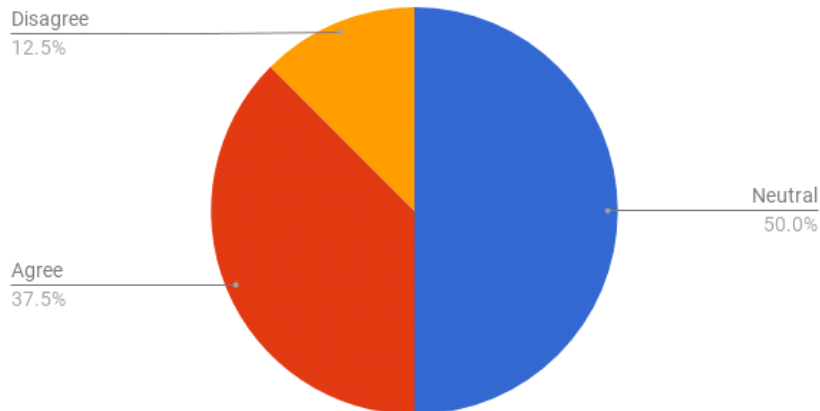
I would have found it more beneficial to attend classes at a downtown location (43 Court St) rather than the Buffalo State Campus.



Column1
17. I would have found it more beneficial to attend classes at a downtown location (43 Court St) rather than the Buffalo State Campus.
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Disagree

## Question 18-

I would like to have had an opportunity to take additional training classes and communicate with other MS-HSA/MPA participants.



Column1
18. I would like to have had an opportunity to take additional training classes and communicate with other MS-HSA/MPA participants.
Neutral
Agree
Disagree
Neutral
Neutral
Neutral
Agree
Agree

## Comments-

Column1
Do you have any other comments not addressed in this survey regarding the MS-HSA/MPA program? Please explain below:
I strongly believe this program is extremely important in keeping the agency's brightest and best employees at ECDSS. Also, participating with other employees of the agency is a huge positive. Learning with and from them was extremely beneficial and perhaps the most rewarding aspect of the program. Finally, I hope this program will continue in the future and I applaud you both for taking on this endeavor. Good Luck!
While I valued the opportunity to complete the Human Services Management MS program, I do not believe that much value was placed on the degree. The most valued and recognized degree at least in the CS/CPS division was the MSW. I have always strongly disagreed with the lack of perceived value on any degree other than the MSW. I management degree certainly applied to the job duties of the department.

I don't feel that by attaining my degree helped in getting promotions. If jobs were not civil service they were awarded to friends and family of higher-ups. I did a pilot program on Medicare Buy-In and saved the county millions of dollars and was not even thanked for it. No one seemed to be grateful for what I accomplished. When the time came for a higher position, it was like I never existed.

The program was a wonderful "bonus" for my employment at ECDSS! It was really valuable and helped provide me with many tools to use, both as a first-line supervisor and as a program director.

I do feel the program definitely helped regarding my understanding of the function of Social Services, in general, and the mind sets of the people involved, specifically. I appreciate the opportunity to have benefited from this excellent program.

I am retired and started working in ECDSS in 1973, long before the MS programs were offered. I was grateful to attend, as I was not financially able to get a MS after I got my BS at age 21.

## APPENDIX I Results of Participant Interviews

### 2) PARTICIPANTS' INFORMATION:

h) NAME:

i) SEX: FEMALE / MALE

j) AGE:

k) CURRENT JOB TITLE/GRADE:

l) JOB TITLE WHEN BEGAN PROGRAM IF DIFFERENT

m) DATE STARTED PROGRAM:

n) DATE COMPLETED PROGRAM or EXPECTED DATE OF COMPLETION:

NAME	SEX	AGE	CURRENT JOB TITLE & GRADE	JOB TITLE WHEN BEGAN PROGRAM	DATE STARTED PROGRAM	DATE COMPLETED PROGRAM
Graduate	F	61	Employment Counselor, 9	Child Support Investigator	2013	2015

Graduate	M	32	Senior Social Welfare Examiner, 7	Social Welfare Examiner	2013	2016
Graduate	F	47	Administrative Director I, 12	Social Welfare Examiner	2007	2011
Participant	F	44	Senior Social Welfare Examiner, 7	Social Welfare Examiner	2015	Current
Graduate	F	57	Senior Social Welfare Examiner, 7	Social Welfare Examiner	2008	2011
Graduate	M	53	Child Support Investigator, 7	Child Support Investigator	2001	2004
Participant	M	41	Special Investigator, 8	Special Investigator	2015	Current
Participant	F	34	Social Caseworker II, 10	Social Caseworker I	2016	Current

## INTERVIEW

### SECTION I

1) When did you begin working for ECDSS?

Name	Date Began at ECDSS
Graduate	2009
Graduate	2006
Graduate	2006
Participant	2010
Graduate	2007
Graduate	1993
Participant	2006
Participant	2011

1a) What motivated you to begin working for ECDSS?

Name	What motivated you to begin working at ECDSS?
Graduate	Took civil service exam, got canvassed, and took job
Graduate	Promotion and educational benefit
Graduate	Wage freeze at City of Buffalo job
Participant	Took test, more money, stability, benefits
Graduate	Husband lost job, needed money and benefits
Graduate	Prior political science background, public service motivation (contribute to society)
Participant	Benefits and pension
Participant	Needed a better job, marketability

1b) What was your level of education when you began?

Column1	Column2
Name	Level of education when you began at ECDSS
Graduate	Bachelors
Graduate	Associates
Graduate	Bachelors
Participant	Associates
Graduate	Bachelors
Graduate	Bachelors and Masters
Participant	Associates
Participant	Bachelors

2) What was your position with ECDSS when you started?

Job Grade?

Was this a supervisory position?

What were the job requirements for that job?

Column1	Column2	Column3	Column4
---------	---------	---------	---------

Name	Position when you started at ECDSS	Supervisory position?	Job requirements for that job
Graduate	SWE, 6	No	Some college
Graduate	SWE, 6	No	Associates, 60 credit hours
Graduate	SWE, 6	No	H.S diploma and experience
Participant	SWE, 6	No	2 years of college
Graduate	Clerk, 1	No	H.S diploma
Graduate	SWE, 6	No	Bachelor's degree and experience
Participant	SWE, 6	No	60 credit hours of college
Participant	Social Caseworker, 8	No	Case management experience and Bachelor's degree

3) How did you find out about the Employee Education Program (EEP), and had you worked for Erie County in another department prior to starting in ECDSS?

4) What motivated you to apply for admittance into the program?

Name	How did you find out about EEP?	What motivated you to apply to EEP?
Graduate	Friend and Email	Free, got accepted, had time, if finished could get better job
Graduate	Email	Personal Satisfaction, Apply for promotions
Graduate	Orientation	It was free!
Participant	Orientation	Wanted to finish Bachelors, opportunity to get Masters, wanted more education
Graduate	Email	Compete for promotions, personal reasons of accomplishment
Graduate	Email	Further career, management position, eligible for more exams
Participant	Orientation	Received Bachelors through program, MPA helps transition to administrative position, career movement, more job opportunities
Participant	Email	Help get to a better place in career

4a) If program standards changed, and the program began requiring that you remain working for ECDSS for a pre-determined specified amount of time after obtaining your degree, would you still have applied for admittance to the program? How would you perceive this standard, and do you consider it a reasonable expectation?

Name	If program standards changed, and the program began requiring that you remain working for ECDSS for a pre-determined specified amount of time after obtaining
------	---

	your degree, would you still have applied for admittance to the program? How would you perceive
Graduate	Yes. Would be a reasonable expectation, easier to stay after working at ECDSS longer
Graduate	Yes. It is reasonable
Graduate	Yes. Would still have applied. Think it is a reasonable expectation. Think it would be reasonable to stay the same amount of time that you were in program
Participant	Yes. Would have made no difference. Probably would not have affected decision.
Graduate	Yes or maybe. Would depend on how long I would have to stay.
Graduate	Yes, would still have applied. Wants career, thinks it's fair, thought it was already a requirement
Participant	Yes, would still have applied. Surprised nothing is in place already. Thinks one year would be reasonable, but longer may deter applicants
Participant	Yes, if it were back when conditions were better. Now, probably not.

5) What were your expectations both personally and professionally before you began the program?

Name	What were your expectations, both personally and professionally before you began program?
Graduate	Without program, would still take exams and move up, if possible. With program, take more exams, more networking
Graduate	Gain more knowledge in public administration. Get degree, have prestige
Graduate	I had no expectations professionally, other than it would be look good on resume if I left the county. Personally, I love learning and knowledge is power.
Participant	Hoping to get promoted, advancement, wants to use what she is learning, more personal satisfaction, family role model.
Graduate	Thought it would be hard, difficult home/work life balance, would increase employability in agency
Graduate	If hadn't enrolled, would still be eligible for certain exams, Master's degree helps get more
Participant	Advance career, personal reasons-love to learn and values education, family role model, expected to get degree, did not expect: rewards and recognitions, made friends, opportunity to network
Participant	Make a career, difficult with Civil service system, education would make advancement easier

5a) After you completed the program had these expectations been met? If you have not yet completed the program, what do you expect after completion?

Column1	Column2
Name	Were your expectations met? What do you expect after you complete?
Graduate	Yes and No. More exam potential (yes). Networking (no), did not make as many connections as had hoped.
Graduate	Yes (got degree). Was a process getting there. May have helped get promotions.
Graduate	It has exceeded expectations and is probably responsible for the promotions and opportunities that I've received so far.



Participant	Personally satisfying. No advancement yet.
Graduate	Experience was more enjoyable than expected. Fit in more on campus than expected. Degree doesn't seem to be respected in County. Proud to have finished and done well.
Graduate	No change in expectations. Degree helps with government knowledge. Still wants management position. Feels more confident. Keeps up on relevant issues. Education is a continuous process.
Participant	Doesn't expect anything. Work way up. Expects degree to help move up.
Participant	No, expectations were not met. Organizational environment changed. More work to do, which makes it harder to move around agency. Harder to get chosen for higher position from the front line.

6) What type of skills do you believe you developed through your participation in the program?

Name	What type of skills do you believe you developed through your participation in the program?
Graduate	Public speaking, better understanding of policies, time-management, prioritization skills
Graduate	Critical thinking skills, time management, research, statistics
Graduate	Management, leadership, critical thinking
Participant	More focused, time-management, research skills, communication skills, confidence, self-awareness of job responsibilities and programs
Graduate	Group/team building, group management, critical thinking, management styles, time-management
Graduate	Group/team building, complete objectives and goals as a team, work as a team member and pick team members, management skills, leadership skills, time-management, more organized
Participant	Time management, better communication skills, better able to communicate with professors and students, professional writing skills, better understanding of policies (where they came from), already had management skills from Bachelor's, looking forward to budgeting
Participant	More aware of organization and climate, more politically aware, leadership skills, more confident, better home/work/school balance.

7) During your participation in the program, and after completion of the program, were you able to apply the skills you learned on the job? Do you have any recommendations for how you can apply these skills?

Name	During your participation in the program, and after completion of the program, were you able to apply the skills you learned on the job? Do you have any recommendations for how you can apply these skills?
Graduate	In some respects. More program knowledge. More agency knowledge.
Graduate	Yes, critical thinking skills. Read and interpret policies. More up to date on government issues. Time management.

Graduate	Since completing the program, I have been promoted to more managerial positions and use the listed skills almost daily.
Participant	Better communication with supervisors, more confident as a person, more focused.
Graduate	Informally. It may go unnoticed to others. Time management. Better team member.
Graduate	Yes, it help in developing own skills. Self-management skills. Better work/life balance. Helps in job here and outside job (writing an article). Doesn't have opportunity to use skills developed through the program
Participant	Communication skills. Able to get more information from people. I take things less personal. Time-management skills (better at planning the day). More efficient worker. Written communication (better written reports/more professional/more objective
Participant	Hard to apply skills because of bureaucracy. Have more confidence to speak up.

7a) Were you able to apply these skills in any other capacity in your personal life?

Name	Were you able to apply these skills in any other capacity in your personal life?
Graduate	Not really
Graduate	Yes, learning about government issues. More understanding about what is going on.
Graduate	Going back to school and successfully completing the Master's program set a great example for my children and really tested out my time management skills.
Participant	Better work/life balance. Puts things into perspective.
Graduate	Yes. Time management skills. Role model for kids. Appreciation for education.
Graduate	Yes. Teaches and is writing an article. Home/work balance. Management of others. Helps build personal experience.
Participant	Yes. Time management skills. Life/work balance.
Participant	Yes. More confidence to do more with less time.

8) Do you believe your job performance at ECDSS has improved due to your participation and in what way(s)?

Name	Do you believe your job performance at ECDSS has improved due to your participation and in what way(s)?
Graduate	Yes. Can explain policies and issues better with clients and coworkers. Better understanding of things.
Graduate	Already had good work ethic. Probably stayed the same.
Graduate	The two promotions I received probably weren't just a coincidence.
Participant	Yes. More aware about what is going on in the world. More aware of what we do at ECDSS. More aware of how we can improve and work towards our mission. Understand the agency's impact on community. Better customer service.
Graduate	Not exactly. Already a consistent, hard worker. Already had good work ethic.

Graduate	Yes. It was definitely a plus. Would do it again. Wishes had more promotional opportunities. Overall pleased with program. Interested in furthering career at ECDSS.
Participant	Yes. Increased job performance. Knowledge increase (administrative law, public policy). Time management. Helpful with research. Improved investigation techniques.
Participant	Yes. Better communicator. Better engagement with supervisors. Prior degree helped with client interaction.

9) After completing the MS-HSA/MPA program, have you or would you consider leaving your employment at ECDSS? Why or why not, and under what circumstances would you consider leaving? Has participation in the program influenced you to stay at ECDSS and how?

Name	After completing the MS-HSA/MPA program, have you or would you consider leaving your employment at ECDSS? Why or why not, and under what circumstances would you consider leaving? Has participation in the program influenced you to stay at ECDSS and how?
Graduate	Yes, for better opportunities, benefits, if it is a better option. Program doesn't help keep him at agency. Program area is not as it used to be.
Graduate	Yes, if something better comes up. Participation has not really influenced decision to stay.
Graduate	I don't think I would consider leaving now unless it were due to an out-of-state position or family need.
Participant	Probably not. Wants to move up. Start with a supervisory position and move up from there.
Graduate	Yes, has looked around. Wants degree to matter and make a difference. Participation hasn't influenced decision to stay at agency.
Graduate	Yes, would consider leaving. Pay would be a big factor. There is a line between public service motivation and the need to provide for my family. If single, may have left. During participation in program, EEP helped decision to remain at agency.
Participant	Yes, but would have to be the right situation (benefits and pay). Needs long-term benefits, retirement package. Program is a perk of the job, but not here because of the program. May not have gone to school, but would still work at ECDSS
Participant	Yes, unless she can get promoted. Wants more experience in leadership and administration. Needs similar benefits. Would consider leaving within 1 or 1.5 years after getting degree. Participation in program helps (yes and no). Completed another degree through program, was going to leave, but decided to stay to get more education.

10) Were you ever involved with special projects, initiatives, or work process redesigns while enrolled or after you completed the program? How did you find out about these projects? If you have not had an opportunity, would you be interested in getting more involved with such initiatives?

10a) If you have participated, what were you involved in and what were the outcomes?

10b) Can you provide details, such as final reports, for any of these initiatives?

Name	Were you ever involved with special projects, initiatives, or work process redesigns while enrolled or after you completed the program? How did you find out about these projects? If you have not had an opportunity, would you be interested in getting mor	If you participated, what were the outcomes?	Can you provide final
Graduate	Yes, occasionally works on side projects. Trains new workers. Has written training packets. Interested in becoming more involved.	n/a	n/a
Graduate	No, hasn't had opportunity. Would be interested in working on projects.	n/a	n/a
Graduate	Yes, was asked to be part of 2 Six Sigma projects. Was asked by management to attend.	Changed the way applications were received/processed in prior department. Improved (decreased) application processing time	Would have to look
Participant	No, nothing yet. Interested in becoming more involved. Is a fire marshall.	n/a	n/a
Graduate	Was asked to be on a committee to study green and white apps, said yes and no one called. Would be interested in working on projects.	n/a	n/a
Graduate	Yes. Formed Interstate Division. Enforcement workers were overwhelmed. Created the Interstate Program to make it easier to track down out of state parents. Time-consuming cases. .	Helps run book club. Belongs to nonprofit at Canisius. West Seneca environmental commission	n/a
Participant	Yes. Safety committee (fire marshall). Rewards and recognition project (low morale in Co.) Wellness Committee/Conference. On advisory board (Hamburg Academy of Finance)	Wellness conference (facilitator/planner ) Quarterly Fraud Meetings. Hamburg board (Redesigned application process, helped develop mentor program)	n/a
Participant	No, hasn't been involved. Would want to see changes come about if did get involved.	n/a	n/a

## SECTION II

11) In retrospect, what difference has the program made in your work with ECDSS?

Name	In retrospect, what difference has the program made in your work with ECDSS?
Graduate	Better communicator. More agency/program knowledge (helps to explain better to others)
Graduate	More analytical about work. Different ways to do things more effectively.
Graduate	It has made me a better overall worker.
Participant	More focused. More aware of politics. More aware of policy issues and impact. Always been organized and detailed.
Graduate	More empathetic to clients
Graduate	Made me a more responsible and thoughtful worker. More organized
Participant	Better communication skills. Increased knowledge base. Wants an administrative job. Better time management.
Participant	Influence me to be a more organized at work, school, and home. Prioritization skills.

12) How many advanced positions have you held since completing the program, or since beginning the program? Do you believe that your degree has helped you obtained these positions? Do you feel that the county can do more to highlight the skills that you have gained through participation, and how?

Name	How many advanced positions have you held since completing the program, or since beginning the program? Do you believe that your degree has helped you obtained these positions? Do you feel that the county can do more to highlight the skills that you hav
Graduate	Received promotion while in program. Degree didn't help.
Graduate	Received 2 advanced promotions. Degree may have helped get promotion.
Graduate	Received 2 advanced promotions. How about something as simple as adding my letters (M.S.) at the end of email signature or on business cards?
Participant	Received 1 promotion. Wasn't due to Master's degree. Civil service exam. County should look at participants more. County should look at those in the program and use them. If County is paying for school, they should use participants more.
Graduate	Received 1 promotion. Degree doesn't seem to have helped.
Graduate	Moved up 3 times since working at ECDSS. Received canvass letter from other Co. agency (would be a mangement position). County can do more to highlight skills. Besides this project, hasn't had any follow-up with EEP. No one has asked about it. Should be more of a resource tool. County should utilize us as a resource.
Participant	Received 2 promotions. No degree help with promotions.
Participant	Received promotions, but degree did not help.

13) Through participation in the program, which professional skills were developed that are essential to your job and how have you applied those skills?

Name	Through participation in the program, which professional skills were developed that are essential to your job and how have you applied those skills?
Graduate	Communication skills. Public speaking. More organized. Time management.
Graduate	Better able to communicate with clients, coworkers, supervisors. Better understanding of big picture.
Graduate	Management skills. Leadership skills. Critical thinking skills.
Participant	More aware of poverty. More aware of outside agencies. More aware of how programs influence community.
Graduate	Research skills. Pay more attention to detail. Professional writing.
Graduate	Not many of skills learned are critical to current job. Would be more useful in a future position (management). Skills are in reserve, no opportunity to use management techniques. Good time-management, and more organized (use in current job)
Participant	Time management. More organized. Internal/external (verbal and written communication). Understanding policies. Confidence-professional confidence. Public speaking
Participant	Engagement with people. Makes the job easier because you're better able to connect with people.

14) What courses in the MS-HSA/MPA program did you find most beneficial? (See list)

Name	What courses in the MS-HSA/MPA program did you find most beneficial?
Graduate	Program evaluation. Intro to health policy. The aging network.
Graduate	US government. Public Policy. Human resource management
Graduate	Leadership in organizations.
Participant	Human resource management. Public Budgeting. Program Management. Metro Government.
Graduate	Favorite- Research methods (but not for content). Leadership in organizations. Communication for managers
Graduate	Leadership course (teaching and nonprofit work). Presentations and team-building helps in every unit, builds team goals and interests, better team player.
Participant	Public Policy. Administrative Law.
Participant	Public Administration (bureaucracy and politics). Accounting/Business class. Organizational theories/business organizational theory (from nonprofit track)

15) What type of training would you have liked to have available that isn't/wasn't part of your MS-HSA/MPA program?

Name	What type of training would you have liked to have available that isn't/wasn't part of your MS-HSA/MPA program?
Graduate	More hands-on work. More hybrid classes (rather than just online)
Graduate	More hand-on government work. Would like an internship program. More real-life situations.

Graduate	The computer course was horrible. I would have liked a "business" computer class (powerpoint, memos, outlook calendar scheduling, etc)
Participant	Wants more in-class classes. Wants to experience campus-life more.
Graduate	If county offers the program, they should be more supportive and cooperative. Research project was hard to get approved. Flex-time was a positive.
Graduate	Wish he had public budgeting (wasn't required back then). More accounting. More quantitative-better for management positions. More business classes. County need more people with public budgeting skills.
Participant	More research methods (more direction, more teaching of actual methods). Public speaking course-presentation prep.
Participant	Didn't like independent study (disconnect between advisor and student-no personal direction). Should be more organized to keep student on track. More guidance.

16) Would you have preferred to attend classes at a downtown location (43 Court) rather than at the Buffalo State Campus/Canisius Campus?

Name	Would you have preferred to attend classes at a downtown location (43 Court) rather than at the Buffalo State Campus/Canisius Campus?
Graduate	Yes. Even if just county people.
Graduate	No. Liked Buffalo State campus. Got to know different people.
Graduate	Not really, no. Although the parking at Buffalo State is terrible, it was still closer to home.
Participant	Rather be at Buffalo State. Like having peers from outside.
Graduate	Yes, absolutely. Would be time-saving.
Graduate	Buffalo State was good. Downtown would be better. If had option, would have chosen downtown.
Participant	Convenient for downtown people, but doesn't make sense. I just county workers, students wouldn't be able to network. More opportunity to meet peers on campus.
Participant	Likes going on campu. Would feel more like work if it was downtown.

17) What type of class room activities would you liked to have more of in the MS-HSA/MPA program? How would this add value to the courses?

Name	What type of class room activities would you liked to have more of in the MS-HSA/MPA program? How would this add value to the courses?
Graduate	More group work. More than just lecture. More interaction with students.
Graduate	Group projects were good for cooperating with others. Group master's project. Classes more geared toward Master's project. Classes seem fragmented with project.
Graduate	More online courses would have been nice. Less team projects (I hated those)

Participant	More field work
Graduate	Nothing comes to mind.
Graduate	Thought activities were good. They did a good job at keeping individuals interested. Should create a network for people to stay connected.
Participant	Don't like group work (others who don't do work), but it does help with group management. Small group projects (2-3 people). More field work. More onsite assignments. More real-world work
Participant	Did a lot of presentations. More experience with conferences. More job options and direction.

18) Now that you have completed the program (or continue to work on your degree) how would you prefer to continue learning and communicating with fellow MS-HSA/MPA program participants?

Name	Now that you have completed the program (or continue to work on your degree) how would you prefer to continue learning and communicating with fellow MS-HSA/MPA program participants?
Graduate	Yes and no. Would depend on what it is and with whom. Maybe something to help advise others with project (would have been helpful)
Graduate	Yes. Would like an alumni program. Would need someone to organize it. Help mentor students and provide encouragement.
Graduate	Would consider it
Participant	Would like more participation in things like this (project). More networking with others (provide advice to help others). Group projects for county
Graduate	Yes, depends on what it is. Would not mind mentoring others with projects.
Graduate	Hasn't been much communication with others (fellow graduates). Could use improvement. Would be useful to network. Administration should look at how to make the program better.
Participant	Would need a plan to get together (need a monthly or bi-monthly meeting, needs to be voluntary). Support group for people still in program. Projects for county. Yes
Participant	Yes, would be interested in a mentorship program to help provide direction for workers.

19) What suggestions do you have regarding the administration of the program?

Name	What suggestions do you have regarding the administration of the program?
Graduate	More communication amongst each other. More advisement communication. Touch base on progress. Be more available to students.
Graduate	Satisfied with program. 1 year waiting period is good.
Graduate	n/a

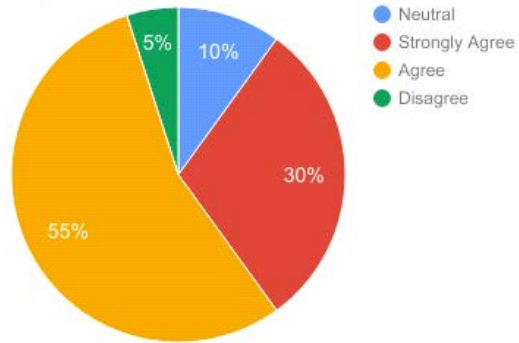


Participant	Have a fear of not moving up and having a degree. No administrative issues with EEP. Process was smooth. Program administrator was helpful.
Graduate	Administration should be more supportive and cooperative. Was hard to get project approved. Flex time was a positive. More support of program from immediate supervisors and above.
Graduate	Never had issue with administration of program. At time, had an excellent contact person and advisor (now deceased-death was loss to program and community). Overall it is a good program. Administration should take suggestions into consideration. Beneficial program to employees and agency
Participant	Keep running the program. Administrators should utilize graduates and skills to benefit county. Need to do something with the degree.
Participant	Communication is key to everything. Main wedge is communication. Lack of communication with advisor. Lack of communication with ECDSS.

## APPENDIX J Results of Participant Survey

### Question 1-

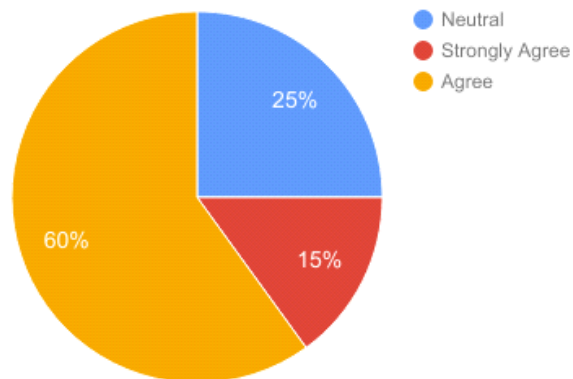
I began/continue working for ECDSS because I want to help serve my community in a meaningful way.



Column1
1. I began/continue working for ECDSS because I want to help serve my community in a meaningful way.
Strongly Agree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree

## Question 2-

Participation in the EEP has influenced my decision to remain working for ECDSS.

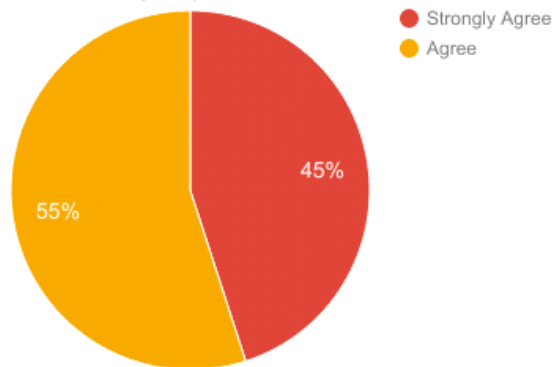


Column1
2. Participation in the EEP has influenced my decision to remain working for ECDSS.
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree

Strongly Agree

### Question 3-

I participated/am participating in the Employee Education Program so that I can be a better worker within the agency.



#### Column1

3. I participated/am participating in the Employee Education Program so that I can be a better worker within the agency.

Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Agree

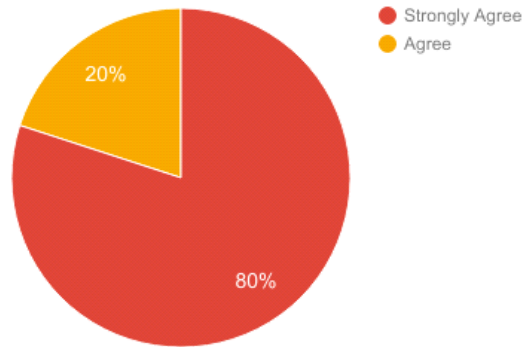
Strongly Agree

Agree

Agree
Strongly Agree

#### Question 4-

I participated/am participating in the Employee Education Program so that I can advance in my career at ECDSS.



#### Column1

4. I participated/am participating in the Employee Education Program so that I can advance in my career at ECDSS.

Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

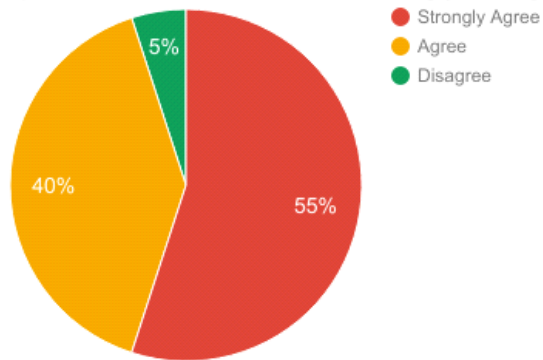
Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree

## Question 5-

If EEP standards changed, and the program began requiring that you remain working for ECDSS for a specified amount of time after receiving your degr...

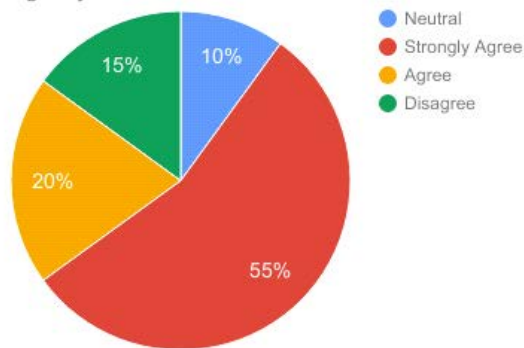


Column1
5. If EEP standards changed, and the program began requiring that you remain working for ECDSS for a specified amount of time after receiving your degree, would you still have applied for admittance into the program?
Disagree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree

Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree

### Question 6-

As a result of this degree, I believe that I have/will have more promotional opportunities within the Agency.

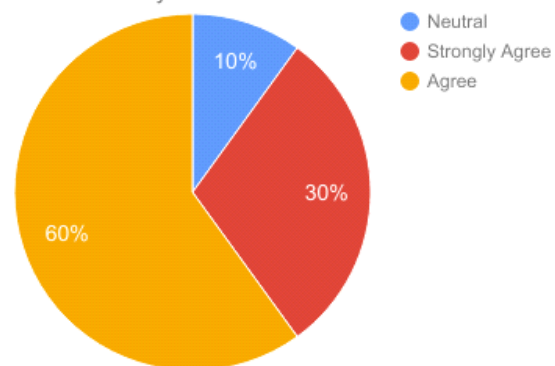


Column1
6. As a result of this degree, I believe that I have/will have more promotional opportunities within the Agency.
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Disagree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Disagree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree

Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Disagree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Strongly Agree

## Question 7-

Completion of the MS-HSA/MPA degree program through Buffalo State College has provided me with the necessary skills needed in order to lead and...



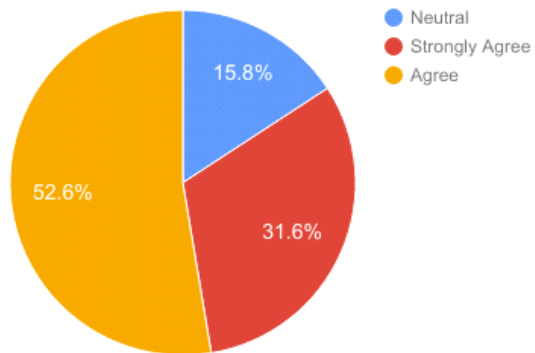
Column1
7. Completion of the MS-HSA/MPA degree program through Buffalo State College has provided me with the necessary skills needed in order to lead and manage others towards the goals of the agency.
Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree



Agree
Agree
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree

### Question 8-

I am able to apply the skills gained through the MS-HSA/MPA program in my personal life.

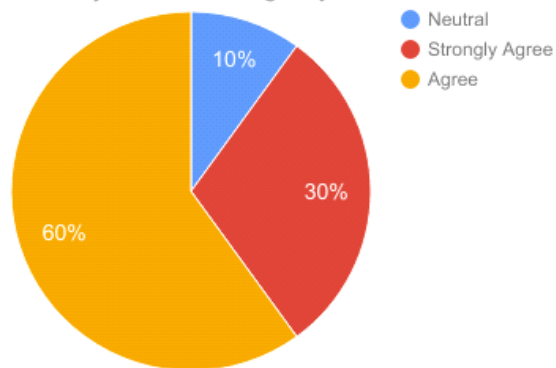


Column1
8. I am able to apply the skills gained through the MS-HSA/MPA program in my personal life.
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Neutral

Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree

### Question 9-

I am able to apply the skills that I have gained through the MS-HSA/MPA degree program in my current job within the agency.

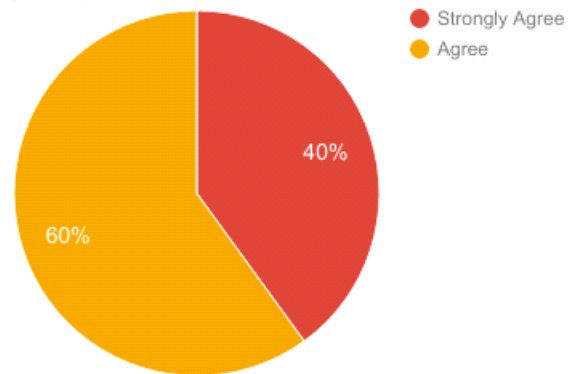


Column1
9. I am able to apply the skills that I have gained through the MS-HSA/MPA degree program in my current job within the agency.
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral

Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree

### Question 10-

I would like a position in the agency where I can utilize the skills that I have learned through participation in the EEP.

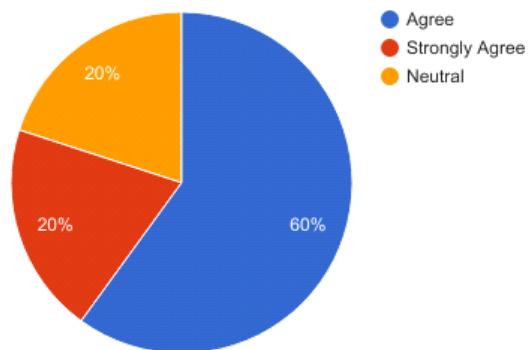


Column1
10. I would like a position in the agency where I can utilize the skills that I have learned through participation in the EEP.
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree

Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree

Question 11-

**My job performance at ECDSS has improved because my participation in the EEP.**

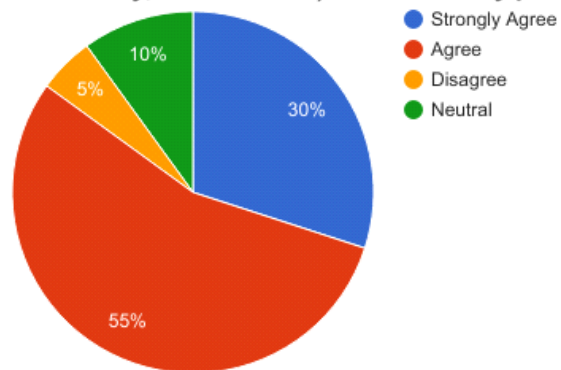


Column1
11. My job performance at ECDSS has improved because my participation in the EEP.
Agree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Neutral

Agree
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree

Question 12-

**I am better able to work with others (co-workers, supervision, customers, members of the community, stakeholders) because of my parti...**

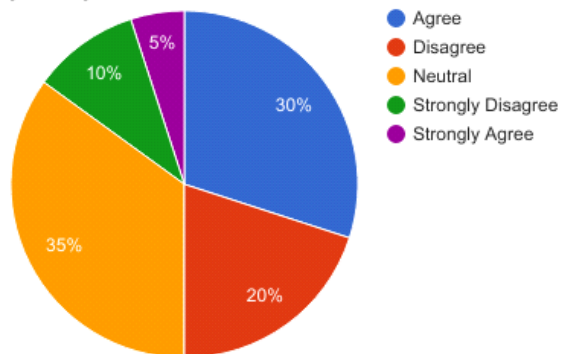


Column1
12. I am better able to work with others (co-workers, supervision, customers, members of the community, stakeholders) because of my participation in the EEP.
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Disagree

Agree
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree

Question 13-

**ECDSS Supervision and Administration are aware of the skills that I have gained through my participation in the EEP.**

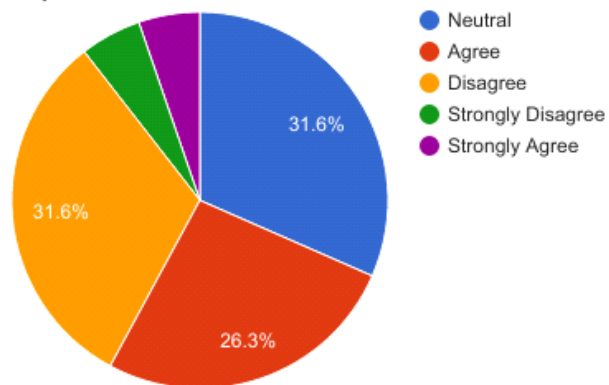


Column1
13. ECDSS Supervision and Administration are aware of the skills that I have gained through my participation in the EEP.
Agree
Agree
Disagree
Neutral
Strongly Disagree
Neutral
Disagree

Agree
Neutral
Neutral
Neutral
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Agree
Strongly Disagree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Agree

Question 14-

**My supervisor utilizes the skills, knowledge, and experience I have gained through the EEP for department initiatives.**

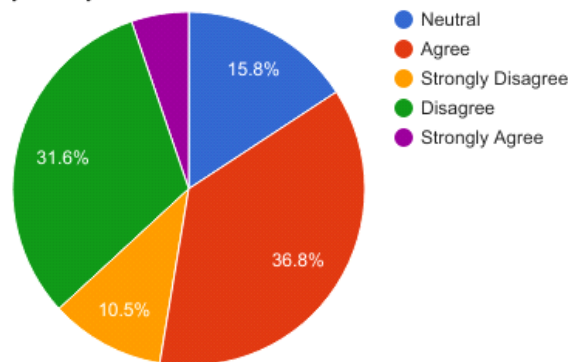


Column1
14. My supervisor utilizes the skills, knowledge, and experience I have gained through the EEP for department initiatives.
Neutral
Agree
Disagree
Agree

Disagree
Neutral
Disagree
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Neutral
Neutral
Disagree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Strongly Agree
Disagree
Agree

Question 15-

**The County provides me with opportunities to utilize the skills I have gained through my participation in the EEP.**



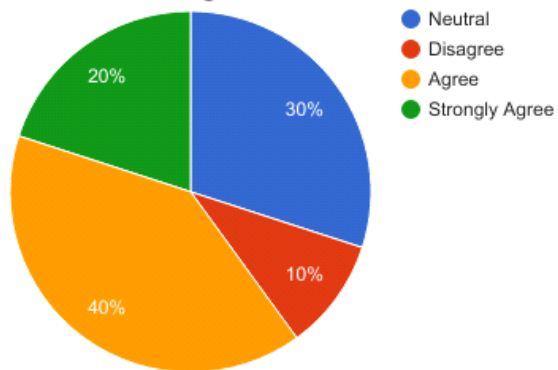
Column1
15. The County provides me with opportunities to utilize the skills I have gained through my participation in the EEP.
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Disagree
Agree



Disagree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Disagree
Disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree

Question 16-

**I am interested in becoming more involved in County/department initiatives, special projects, and work redesigns.**



#### Column1

16. I am interested in becoming more involved in County/department initiatives, special projects, and work redesigns.

Neutral

Neutral

Disagree

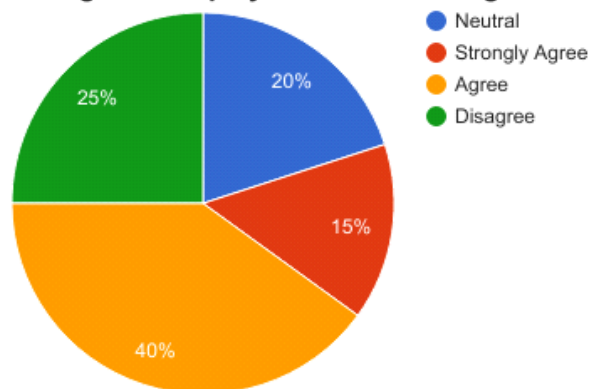
Agree

Strongly Agree

Neutral
Disagree
Neutral
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Agree
Agree

Question 17-

**I am satisfied with the position I currently have at ECDSS AND the degree that I have earned through the Employee Education Program.**



#### Column1

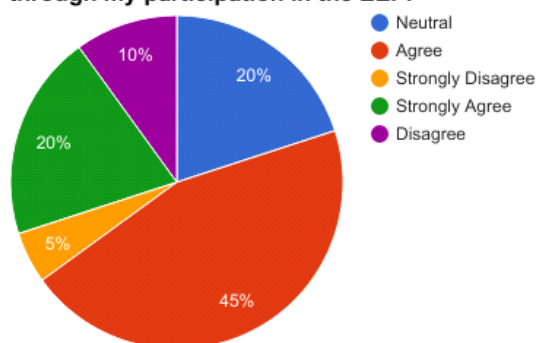
17. I am satisfied with the position I currently have at ECDSS AND the degree that I have earned through the Employee Education Program.

Neutral  
Strongly Agree  
Strongly Agree

Agree
Disagree
Agree
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Disagree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Disagree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Agree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree

Question 18-

**I would consider outside employment for a position that utilizes the skills I have gained through my participation in the EEP.**



#### Column1

18. I would consider outside employment for a position that utilizes the skills I have gained through my participation in the EEP.

Neutral

Agree

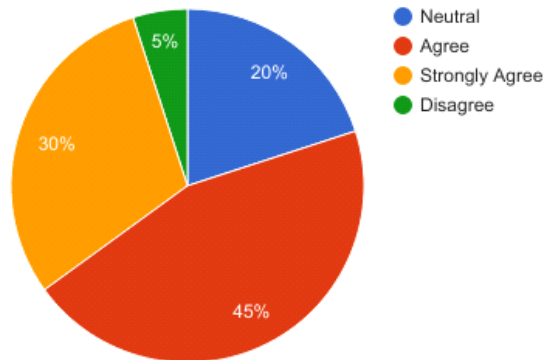
Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

Agree
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Agree
Neutral

Question 19-

**I am satisfied with the way the EEP is administered by both County and Buffalo State College Administrations.**



#### Column1

19. I am satisfied with the way the EEP is administered by both County and Buffalo State College Administrations.

Neutral

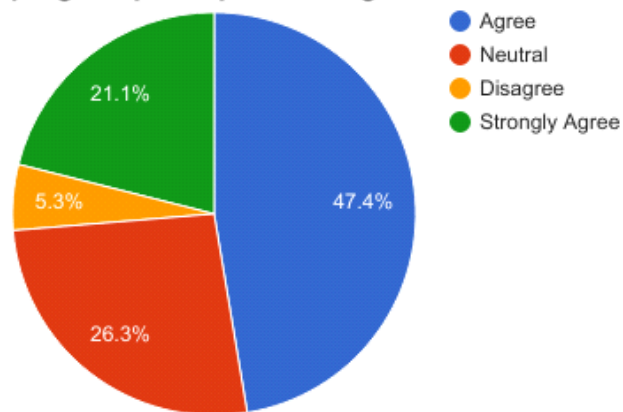
Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Disagree
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree

Question 20-

**I would like to continue learning and communicating with fellow MS-HSA/MPA program participants and graduates.**



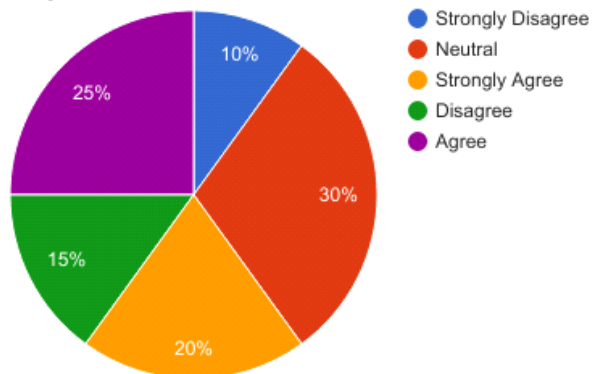
#### Column1

20. I would like to continue learning and communicating with fellow MS-HSA/MPA program participants and graduates.

Agree
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Agree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Neutral
Strongly Agree

Question 21-

**I would have preferred classes in a downtown location (for example, 43 Court St). \*\*This would only include students from ECDSS.**



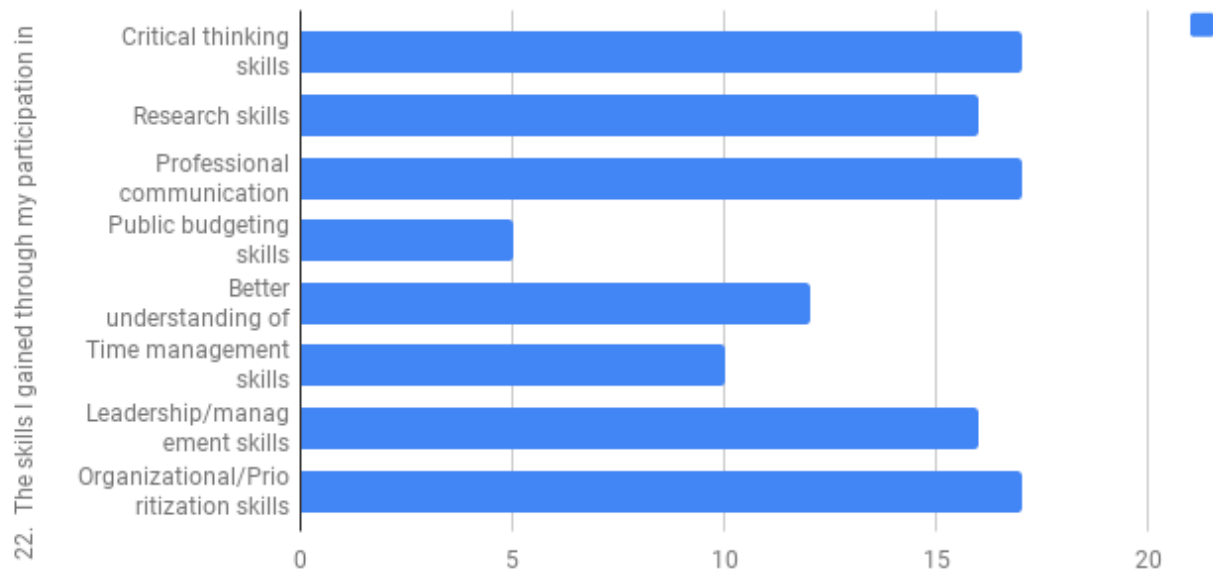
#### Column1

21. I would have preferred classes in a downtown location (for example, 43 Court St). \*\*This would only include students from ECDSS.

Strongly Disagree
Neutral
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Neutral
Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Agree
Disagree
Neutral

Question 22-

Count of 22. The skills I gained through my participation in the MS-HSA/MPA degree program include: (Please choose all that apply)



Count of 22. The skills I gained through my participation in the MS-HSA/MPA

**22. The skills I gained through my participation in the MS-HSA/MPA degree program include: (Please choose all that apply)**

Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("Big Picture View");Time management skills; Leadership/management skills; Research skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills
Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Leadership/management skills; Research skills
Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Leadership/management skills; Research skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills
Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("Big Picture View");Leadership/management skills; Public budgeting skills; Research skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills
Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("Big Picture View");Time management skills; Leadership/management skills; Public budgeting skills; Research skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills
Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("Big Picture View");Time management skills; Leadership/management skills; Research skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills



Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Leadership/management skills; Research skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills
Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("Big Picture View");Leadership/management skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills
Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Leadership/management skills; Research skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills
Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("Big Picture View");Time management skills; Leadership/management skills; Research skills ;Organizational/Prioritization skills
Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("Big Picture View");Time management skills; Public budgeting skills; Research skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills
Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("Big Picture View");Time management skills; Leadership/management skills; Public budgeting skills; Research skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills
Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("Big Picture View");Time management skills; Leadership/management skills; Research skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills
Better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("Big Picture View");Time management skills; Research skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills
Critical thinking skills; Better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("Big Picture View");Organizational/Prioritization skills
Professional communication skills (verbal and written); Leadership/management skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills
Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Time management skills; Leadership/management skills; Research skills
Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Leadership/management skills; Public budgeting skills; Research skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills
Critical thinking skills; Professional communication skills (verbal and written);Better understanding of how government agencies/organizations work ("Big Picture View");Time management skills; Leadership/management skills; Research skills; Organizational/Prioritization skills

## Comments-

### **Additional comments or suggestions regarding the EEP: (Improvements, favorite classes/classroom activities, additional training suggestions, etc.)**

County readjustment of work hours allows for class participation and completion which I think is a real big asset toward graduating. However, the continual reviewing of available monies toward program completion I consider to be a deterrent. A couple of times I have been told there is no more money when I already undertook applying and so forth. That has been the only negative I have encountered with the EEP program. Thank you.

I was in the EEP program early on in my time at ECDSS (2000 graduate) and I am retiring soon. I am not sure how the program is currently, but the majority of adjunct teachers I had worked in private businesses and not in the human service field. I feel having adjunct teachers that did or currently

work in the human services field would be a plus because most of them are non profit and yet there are performance criteria they need to follow.

Leadership in Public Service

Would like to see more support/recognition from ECDSS for the employees who have worked so hard in the EEP

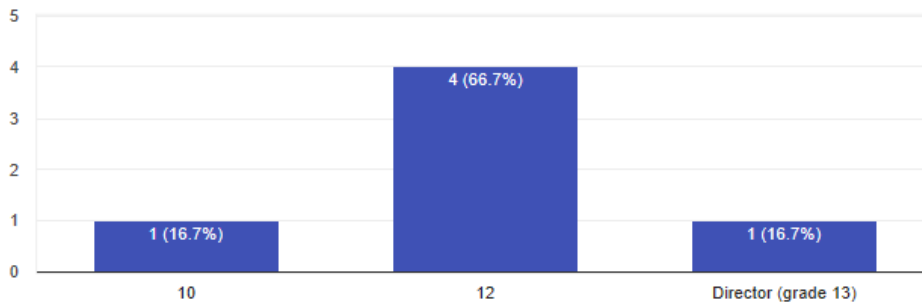
Program should focus on research project from the very beginning of the MPA program. Students should determine their project subject during the first semester and start researching and have assistance from a mentor or faculty advisor as to how to focus on that subject research.

More training in Public Finances and Supervision

## APPENDIX K Results of Supervisor Survey

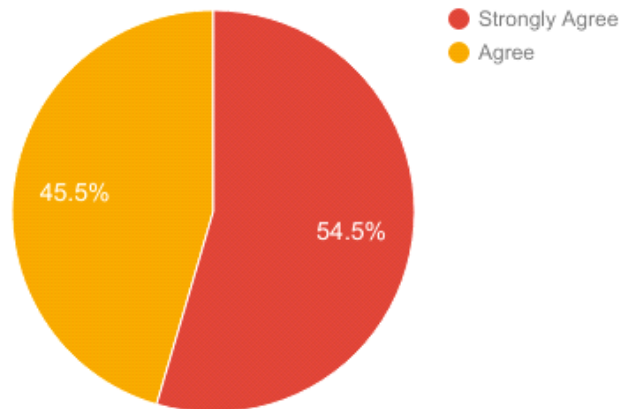
### Job Grade

6 responses



### Question 1-

I believe that the Employee Education Program is a valuable program to ECDSS and its employees.



#### Column1

1. I believe that the Employee Education Program is a valuable program to ECDSS and its employees.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Agree

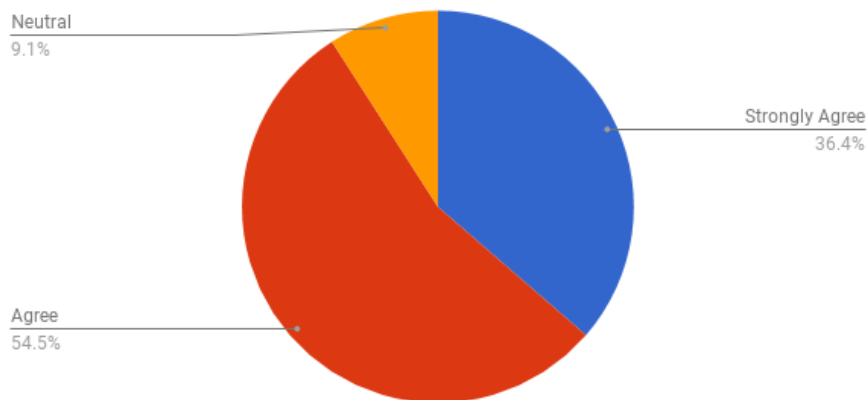
Strongly Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree

## Question 2-

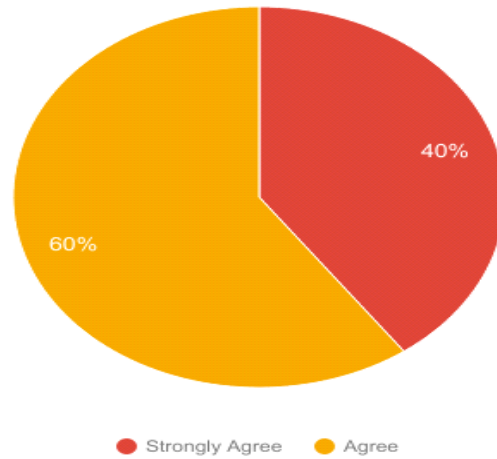
I believe that the Employee Education Program benefits the community because it provides employees with an advanced education in public administration and public policy.



Column1
2. I believe that the Employee Education Program benefits the community because it provides employees with an advanced education in public administration and public policy.
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree

## Question 3-

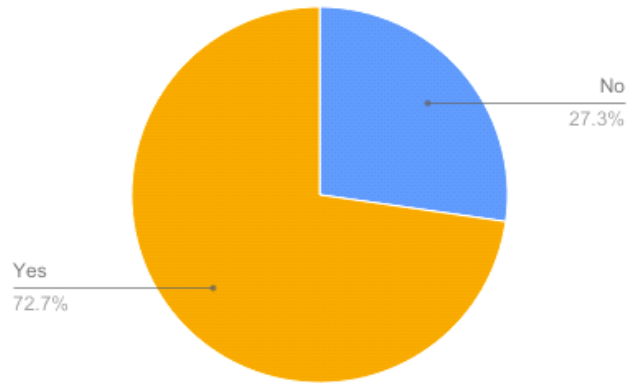
I believe that the MS-HSA/MPA degree program, sponsored by the ECDSS Employee Education Program, helps provide employees with the skills they will use at ECDSS.



Column1
3. I believe that the MS-HSA/MPA degree program, sponsored by the ECDSS Employee Education Program, helps provide employees with the skills they will use at ECDSS.
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree

## Question 4-

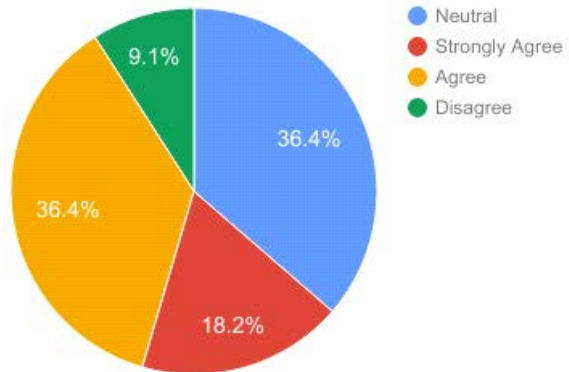
I have directly or indirectly supervised a participant of the MS-HSA/MPA program.



Column1
4. I have directly or indirectly supervised a participant of the MS-HSA/MPA program.
Yes
No
Yes
Yes
No
Yes
Yes
No
Yes
Yes
Yes

## Question 5-

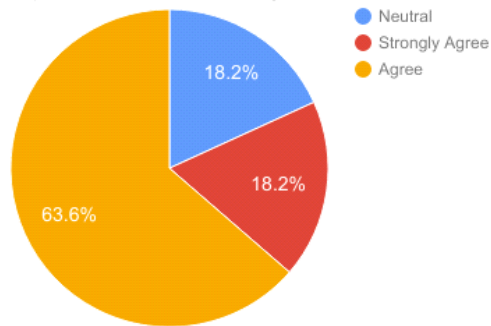
I am aware of the skills that employees gain through their participation in the MS-HSA/MPA program.



Column1
5. I am aware of the skills that employees gain through their participation in the MS-HSA/MPA program.
Agree
Neutral
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree

## Question 6-

Employees that have participated in the MS-HSA/MPA are able to apply their skills, knowledge, and experience in their current job.



## Column1

6. Employees that have participated in the MS-HSA/MPA are able to apply their skills, knowledge, and experience in their current job.

Agree

Agree

Agree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Strongly Agree

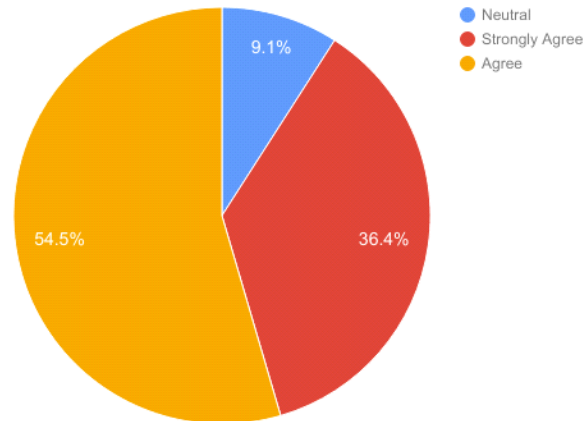
Agree

Agree



## Question 7-

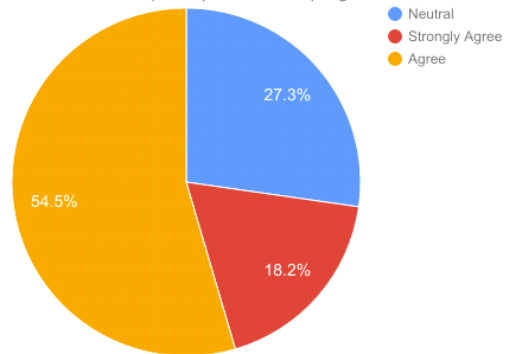
I (would) recommend employees that have participated in the MS-HSA/MPA program for department/county initiatives, work redesigns, and special projects.



Column1
7. I (would) recommend employees that have participated in the MS-HSA/MPA program for department/county initiatives, work redesigns, and special projects.
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree

## Question 8-

Participants/graduates of the MS-HSA/MPA program are better able to work with others (co-workers, supervisors, customers/representatives, members of the community, stakeholders) because of their participation in the program.



## Column1

8. Participants/graduates of the MS-HSA/MPA program are better able to work with others (co-workers, supervisors, customers/representatives, members of the community, stakeholders) because of their participation in the program.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Agree

Agree

Neutral

Agree

Neutral

Neutral

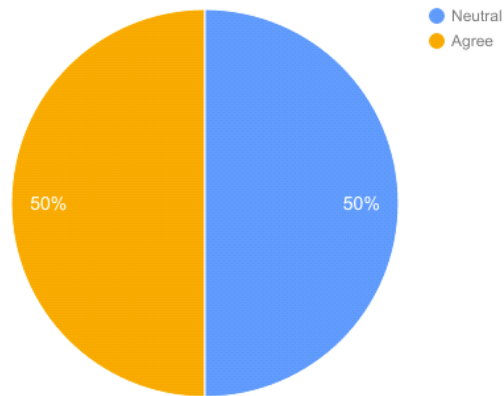
Strongly Agree

Agree

Agree

## Question 9-

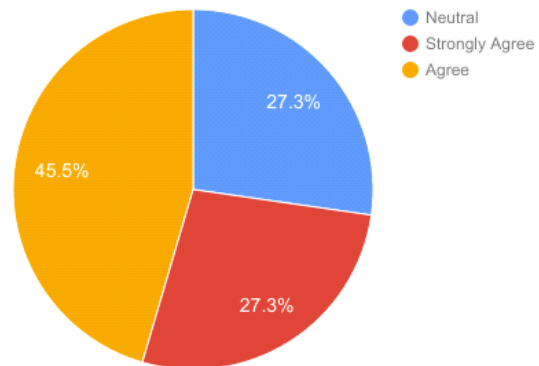
The MS-HSA/MPA degree program, sponsored by the Employee Education Program, has improved the performance of participants that I supervise.



Column1
9. The MS-HSA/MPA degree program, sponsored by the Employee Education Program, has improved the performance of participants that I supervise.
Agree
Neutral
Neutral
Neutral
Agree
Neutral
Neutral
Agree
Agree
Agree

## Question 10-

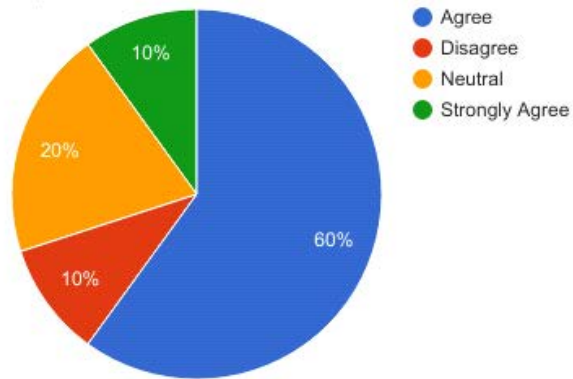
When I interview applicants, I take into consideration whether or not they have a degree.



Column1
10. When I interview applicants, I take into consideration whether or not they have a degree.
Agree
Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree
Neutral

## Question 11-

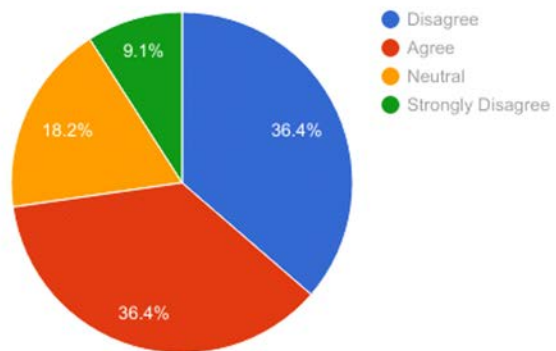
An MS-HSA/MPA degree stands out when I am interviewing applicants interested in joining my department.



Column1
11. An MS-HSA/MPA degree stands out when I am interviewing applicants interested in joining my department.
Agree
Agree
Disagree
Agree
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree
Neutral

## Question 12-

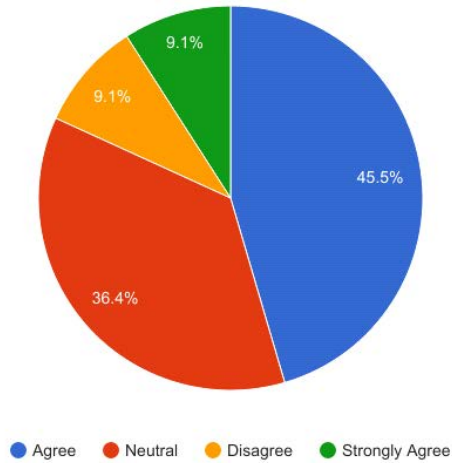
I would NOT recommend the MPA program to all employees in my department.



Column1
12. I would NOT recommend the MPA program to all employees in my department.
Disagree
Disagree
Agree
Neutral
Agree
Disagree
Agree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly Disagree
Neutral

## Question 13-

If a supervisory/administrative position opened in my department, I would recommend one of my employees that graduated with an MS-HSA/MPA degree.



## Column1

13. If a supervisory/administrative position opened in my department, I would recommend one of my employees that graduated with an MS-HSA/MPA degree.

Agree

Agree

Neutral

Agree

Neutral

Agree

Disagree

Neutral

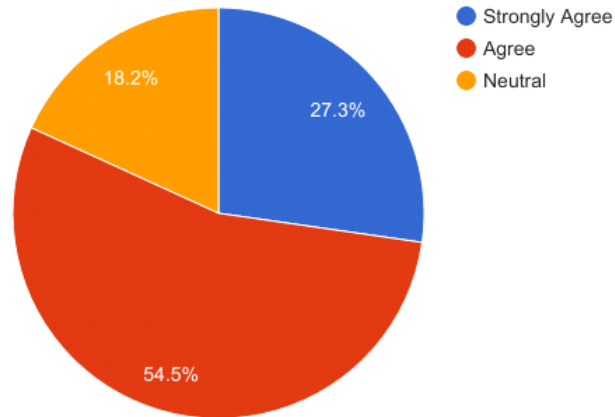
Agree

Strongly Agree

Neutral

## Question 14-

When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee with an understanding of how government agencies must adapt to various internal and external environments.



## Column1

14. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee with an understanding of how government agencies must adapt to various internal and external environments.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Agree

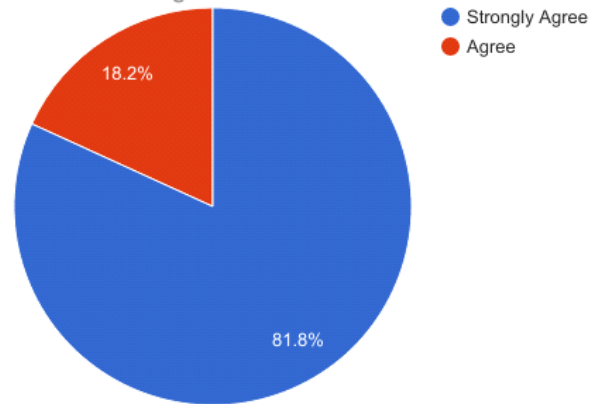
Agree

Neutral



## Question 15-

When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee with organizational, prioritization, and time management skills.



## Column1

15. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee with organizational, prioritization, and time management skills.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

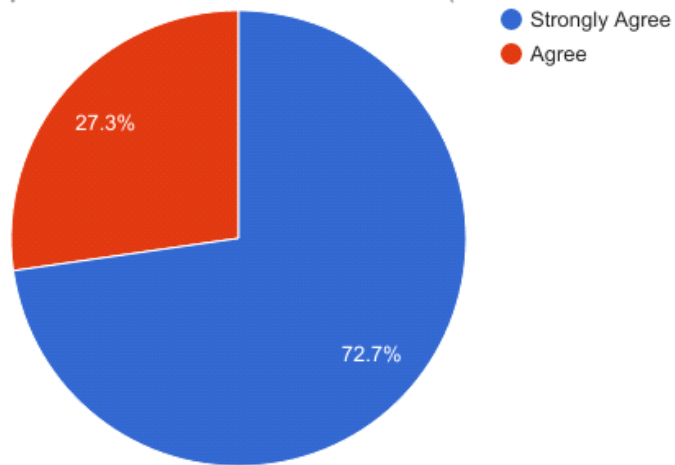
Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

## Question 16-

When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee with well-developed and professional communication skills (written and verbal).



## Column1

16. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee with well-developed and professional communication skills (written and verbal).

Strongly Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

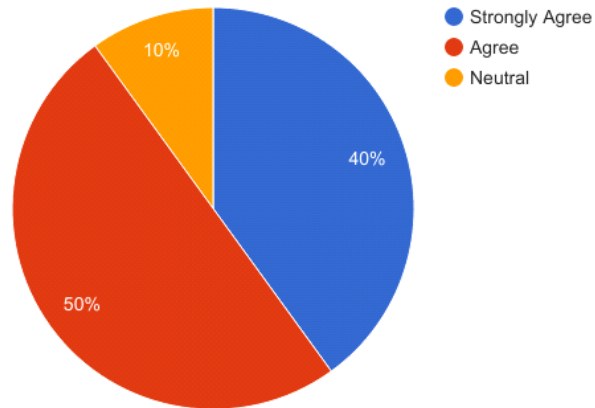
Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

## Question 17-

When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that has participated in leadership/management training courses or classes.



## Column1

17. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that has participated in leadership/management training courses or classes.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Agree

Agree

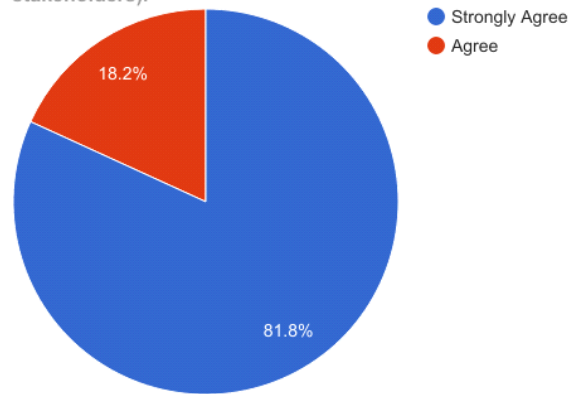
Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Neutral

## Question 18-

When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that is able to effectively communicate with others (co-workers, subordinates, supervisors, customers/representatives, stakeholders).



**18. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that is able to effectively communicate with others (co-workers, subordinates, supervisors, customers/representatives, stakehol**

Strongly Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

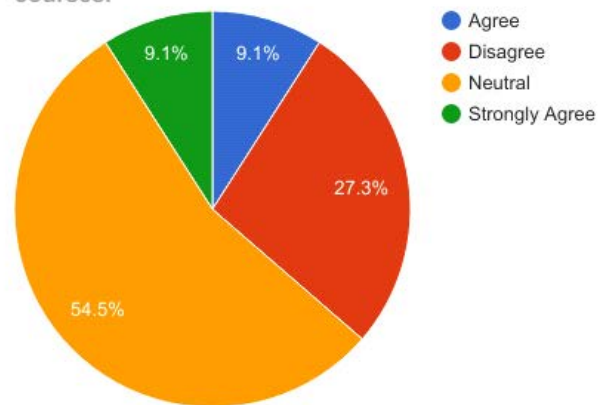
Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

## Question 19-

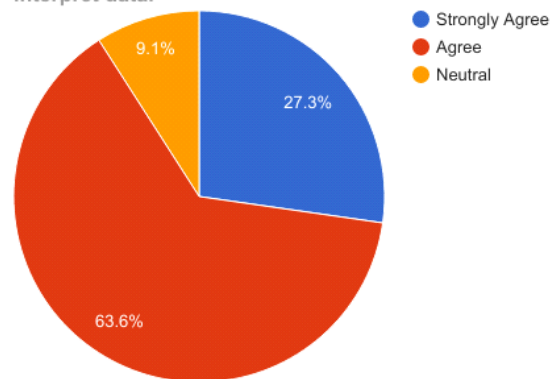
When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that has taken public budgeting courses.



Column1
19. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that has taken public budgeting courses.
Agree
Disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Agree
Neutral
Neutral
Neutral
Neutral
Neutral

## Question 20-

When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that can effectively research and interpret data.



## Column1

20. When interviewing applicants for a supervisory/management position in my department, I would prefer a prospective employee that can effectively research and interpret data.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Agree

Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

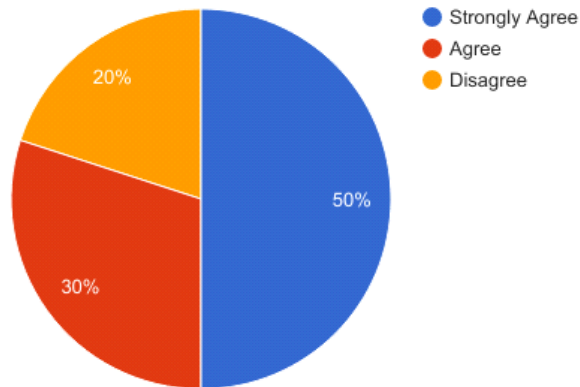
Agree

Agree

Neutral

## Question 21-

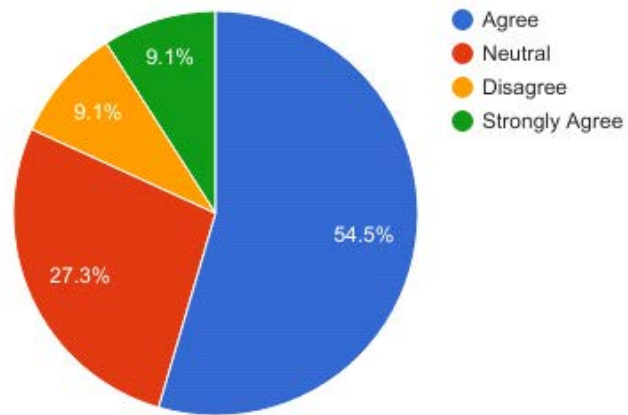
I would prefer to hire an applicant that already works within the agency and is familiar with its culture, programs/services, and computer systems.



Column1
21. I would prefer to hire an applicant that already works within the agency and is familiar with its culture, programs/services, and computer systems.
Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree

## Question 22-

I believe that employees that choose to participate in the EEP are dedicated to working at ECDSS.

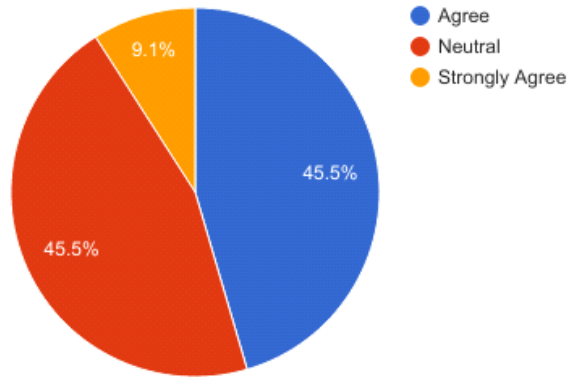


Column1
22. I believe that employees that choose to participate in the EEP are dedicated to working at ECDSS.
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Neutral
Disagree
Agree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree



## Question 23-

I am satisfied with the way that the EEP/MPA program is administered by the County.



Column1
23. I am satisfied with the way that the EEP/MPA program is administered by the County.
Agree
Agree
Neutral
Neutral
Neutral
Neutral
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree
Agree
Agree

## Question 24-

Column1
24. Please list any skills (or other requirements) that you deem important for supervisors/administrators to have for work here at ECDSS.
Customer service focused, good time and attendance, and the ability to follow deadlines, policies, and directives.
An ability to adapt to change, have and use common sense, be able to view things beyond specific departments.
Conflict resolution
Common sense
I prefer to hire individuals who have had several years experience working in the private sector prior to working at ECDSS.

## **APPENDIX L Results of Stakeholder Interview**

### **Goals:**

#### **Erie County-**

- Increase professionalism
- Know what is going on
- Teach/learn why government is different from business
- Apply skills on the job
- Promotability
- Recruitment tool
- Succession tool

#### **Buffalo State-**

- Encourage ethical behavior
- Follow mission of the college and department (Political Science)
- Provide advance course study-conceptual skills, technical skills, professional education
- Provide curriculum aligned with NASPAA
- Diversity and cultural competency training
- Teach research skills

### **Skills:**

#### **Erie County-**

- Want employees to see bigger picture
- Better understanding of government issues-political and financial environments-how it affects how things get done
- Administration is the focus

#### **Buffalo State-**

- Public budgeting skills
- Public policy
- Data collection and analysis

- Cost-benefit analysis
- Human resource management
- More specialized skills-established through elective courses
- Program evaluation

### **How do we know if goals are being met?**

#### **Erie County-**

- Employees are able to use skills on job
- Increased performance
- Employees are staying at agency
- Employees are getting promoted

#### **Buffalo State-**

- Core courses meet NASPAA standards
- Students are passing coursework
- Students are networking with others
- Students evaluate coursework and professors

### **Are there any obstacles in the way of attaining these goals?**

#### **Erie County-**

- Lack of staff, time, and outreach to target audience
- Need more recruitment into program

#### **Buffalo State-**

- Understaffing (in need of full-time professors)
- Underfunded-not enough money
- Hard to get faculty in Western New York

### **Any way to overcome obstacles?**

#### **Erie County-**

- Need to recruitment more employees into program
- Lower admission standards into program (time with ECDSS from 3 to 1)

#### **Buffalo State-**

- Currently 4 MPA programs in SUNY (Brockport, Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo State)
- Need more full-time faculty-not just adjunct
- Adjunct need to have MPA and at least 10 years in field

### **What is currently being done to evaluate the program?**

#### **Erie County-**

- Capstone projects
- Upkeep of records

#### **Buffalo State-**

- Internal and external class assessments- yearly assessments, 3 and 5-year assessment cycles
  - Internal- every course/class is evaluated by professors and students (yearly)
  - External- course assessment (3-year cycle); instructor assessments; SUNY assessments (every 5 years-very extensive)

### **How are participants chosen for the program?**

#### **Erie County-**

- Must have 3 years with ECDSS
- Supervisor approval
- High performer in agency

#### **Buffalo State-**

- No academic references required for ECDSS employees

- Need to have at least 2.5 GPA in undergraduate coursework with experience (hardline)
- ECDSS employees are admitted more liberally
- No GRE requirements

**How are supervisors involved in the process? How could they be more involved?**

**Erie County-**

- Supervisor approves/disapproves application
- Employee performance evaluation (as of last evaluation)
- Managers can recommend high-performing employees

**Buffalo State-**

N/A

**What makes the EEP unique? How does it differ from other leadership training initiatives in the department? Positives/Negatives?**

**ECDSS-**

- (Other) training is tied to competency of individual job tasks
- Individualized training for all new recruits
- Individualized training for departments
- EEP provides more generalized/expanded professionalization through extensive coursework

**Buffalo State-**

N/A

**What improvements could be made?**

**Erie County-**

- Could become a training requirement for supervisors
- Recruit more employees into program (increase professionalization in agency)
- Get recruiters from college to come and talk to employees
- Get EEP alumni to come in and talk to employees
- Implement an internship program

-EEP graduates can work on ECDSS projects

**Buffalo State-**

-Can add any tracks you want added to MPA

-ex) human service administration track- can bring in administrators from ECDSS; can add special topics courses;

-Implement county and city EEP to increase diplomacy-administrators can work together to co-teach classes

-More full-time faculty

-Ability to bring people together

-Already encourages students to take civil service exams

## **APPENDIX M Results of Key Participant Interview**

### **Why did you decide to apply to EEP?**

- Only entered program towards the end of MPA
- Good opportunity
- Save money on tuition
- Capstone project was performed while in EEP

### **Do you feel the program is valuable to ECDSS? Why?**

Yes. EEP is important and valuable to agency.

MPA is more applicable.

MPA applicants should have a plan about how he/she can benefit ECDSS.

I feel that the graduates of the program can be better utilized within the agency. County should better utilize graduates. Not using the graduates is a waste of resources. We should use them rather than have them leave for employment elsewhere.

Civil service system holds employees back.

### **What skills did you walk away with?**

\*\*Already had skills from other degree coursework (has dual MPA)

- Did better develop skills:
  - better understanding of how politics plays role in getting things done
  - better understanding of bureaucratic issues
  - better understanding of agency/systems/organizational processes
  - Capstone experience
  - Research skills
  - Public budgeting skills

### **What are some key skills you use on the job?**

- Public budgeting
- Research skills- Staying proactive- constantly reading articles and staying up to date on current issues. Can also see what others in the field are doing about the same issues.



- Supervisory and Disciplinary Tools- parallel process, progressive discipline
- Human services administration
- Statistics
- Emotional intelligence
- Equal Employment/Opportunity

**Job Duties:**

- Deals with personnel issues (all the way from frontline and up)
- Process evaluation- taking an outside look at processes and find ways to improve
- Research issues to find evidence-based solutions
- Program evaluations
- Requests for Proposals (RFP)

**Do you feel education is important for public sector employees and public administrators? Why?**

Yes, education should be mandatory for staff.

- Education provides opportunities to employees.
- Education is not utilized the way it should be.
- Education should be used to plan for the future.
- There are opportunities to move up and apply more skills.
- Supervisors and administrators should enroll in EEP.
- Civil service exams do not show knowledge. Can later be found that there is a lack of diverse skill sets.
- Knowledge/education helps employees to be better supervisors and leaders.
- Provides leadership skills
- Need to be open to more ideas

## **APPENDIX N Results of Key Stakeholder Interview**

### **What are the goals of the program?**

From HRD perspective:

- Develop employee skill sets
- Utilize skills within the scope of the job
- Better the agency

Self-perspective:

- Free degree program
- Program is a fringe benefit, not a recruitment or retention tool
- Need to get MPAs more involved

### **Do you believe the goals of the program are being met?**

No. We need to get something in place to get participants more involved.

Program is seen only as a perk. The perk is being met.

### **Do you have any concerns regarding the EEP?**

- Most jobs do not require a degree.
- The agency is not getting value for what is being paid out.
- Don't want disengagement from the department because employees are not the skills and knowledge they obtained through the program.
- Don't want people to get their degree and leave agency.

### **How do you feel these concerns can be addressed?**

- Higher retention rates
- Higher degrees should provide an advanced level of skills.
- Should get a commitment from participants up front to "pay it forward" (to agency). Ex.) Alumni get more involved with participants; Internship program.
- Courses should be driven by job

- While in program, participants should be able to see what they can do with degrees (within agency)
- Get administrators more involved with classes (adjunct) to introduce ECDSS and its responsibilities and duties.
- Customize the degree to relate more to the job.
- Need exposure to structured mentorship. Should be a requirement of participants.
- Need a system in place to determine whether the goals are being met

[illegible]

## APPENDIX P Retiree Triangulation of Results

	Triangulation of Results- Retirees							
Category	Job Performance	Benefit to Community	Obtainment of Skill	Use of Skills	Promotion	Job Retention	Mgmt Aware of Skills	Program Satisfaction
	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5
	5	4	4	5	5	3	4	5
	5	4	4	5	4	3	4	5
	5	4	4	4	4	2	4	5
	4	4	4	4	4	1	4	4
	4	3	4	4	4	1	3	4
	4	3	3	3	4	1	2	4
	4	3	1	1	3	1	1	1
	5		5	4	5	3		
	5		5	4	5	2		
	5		4	4	4	2		
	5		4	4	4	2		
	4		4	4	4	1		
	4		3	3	4	1		
	4		3	3	1	1		
	3		1	1	1	1		
	5		5					
	5		5					
	4		5					
	4		4					
	4		4					
	4		4					
	4		3					
	2		1					
			5					
			5					
			5					
			5					
			4					
			4					
			4					
			4					
			1					
Count	24	8	32	16	16	16	8	8
Mean	4.291666667	3.75	3.78125	3.625	3.8125	1.8125	3.375	4.125
Median	4	4	4	4	4	1.5	4	4.5
Mode	4	4	4	4	4	1	4	5
Standard Deviation (sample)	0.750603622	0.707106781	1.203858531	1.204159458	1.223042654	0.981070844	1.302470181	1.356202682
	Q# 2, 6, 12	Q# 7	Q# 11, 13, 14, 16	Q# 9 & 15	Q# 3 & 10	Q# 4 & 5	Q# 8	Q# 16

